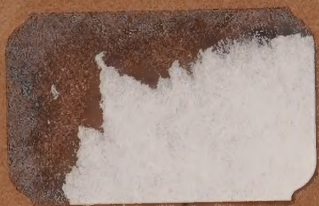


POPULISM IN ALABAMA

1874-1896

BY
JOHN B. CLARK, A. M.

Dean and Professor of History
and Economics, Jackson
College



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POPULISM IN ALABAMA

By
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy at New York University.

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JOHN B. CLARK

INTRODUCTION

In dealing with the subject Populism in Alabama, it is the purpose of the writer to show as clearly as possible (1) the fundamental aspects of the commonwealth which gave birth to this insurgent movement; (2) to trace the history of the organizations, economic and political, upon which the Populist party was founded; (3) to study the workings of the Populists as an organized political force; (4) to show why the party passed; and (5) to attempt an evaluation of the significance of the movement—mediate and immediate—upon the state's history.

The Populist Movement in a few other states has been studied, but no previous effort has been made in connection with the subject in Alabama. This one fact has obviously made the present study all the more difficult, forcing the author to "break the ice", as it were. Under such conditions, the chief source of material has necessarily been the contemporary newspapers and public records of the state. It has been no small task to ferret information from dusty, unindexed newspapers, buried away in dark closets. But that was not the worst obstacle. Newspaper data, amid heated political campaigns, are extremely partisan, hence often unreliable. This has placed upon the writer the burden of essaying for the first time an impartial interpretation of the material used.

The author has no "axe to grind"; he holds brief for neither Republican, "Regularity" Democrat, "Jeffersonian" Democrat, nor "Simon-Pure" Populist. His aim in this essay has been to let the facts speak for themselves, knowing full well that neither faction was an amateur at propagandism.

For valuable suggestions and many courtesies shown the essayist in the preparation of this monograph, thanks and appreciation are due, and are hereby gratefully expressed to Peter A. Brannon, Curator of the State De-

partment of Archives and History, Montgomery; to Judge Walter B. Jones, Montgomery; and to the following members of the Graduate Faculty of New York University, namely, Dean Marshall S. Brown and Professor John Musser, of the History Department; and Professors R. J. Swenson and E. C. Smith, of the Government Department. The work would have been practically impossible without the encouragement and clerical assistance of my wife, Lillie Pearce Clark. The many imperfections, however, in this initial study of Populism in Alabama are chargeable to the author.

JOHN B. CLARK,
Marion, Alabama

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CHAPTER I

POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

DEMOCRACY REDEEMED (1874)

Economics and politics are often bound together in the relationship of cause and effect. So it was in the case of the Populist movement which swept over large sections of the United States in the early 'nineties. Populism was essentially economic in origin.¹ It was fundamentally an agrarian movement which resulted from accumulated woes, real and imaginary. Populism in Alabama was after all perhaps more of a political than a social or industrial uprising "against the groups of men who controlled the Democratic machines," and hence who dominated the entire political life of the state.²

This story begins primarily with 1874, the last year of what may be called the first period of "reconstruction" for the political revolution in Alabama known as "reconstruction" covered a period of thirty-six years, 1865 to 1901. The first extended from the surrender at Appomattox, April 9, 1865, to the November election of 1874 when, with "white supremacy or death" as the shibboleth, the Democrats won. The second period³ was from 1874 to 1901.

From 1868 to 1875, under the so-called carpetbag-scalawag constitution, the government of Alabama was turned upside down with the most illiterate race indirectly in control of the state's destiny. Strangers, who had never resided in the state till after the war, occupied practically all government positions—legislative, executive and judicial—from the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives, down through the state, counties and beats. In no position from top to bottom was there any guarantee against ignorance, corruption and graft.⁴ Already the

¹ F. L. McVey, *The Populist Movement*, p. 137; Captain A. T. Goodwyn, *Personal Correspondence*, Sept. 4, 1924.

² W. G. Brown, *The Lower South in American History*, p. 215.

³ John W. DuBose, "Alabama Politics," Article No. 27, in *Birmingham Age Herald*, May 12, 1913.

⁴ W. G. Brown, *Alabama History*, p. 268.

state debt was ranging⁵ into millions, and amid the scourge of yellow fever, political misrule, economic, financial and social distress, the future held naught but gloom to the well wishers of the state, and many unwilling to face conditions left for other regions.⁶

The Democratic and Conservative party of the state decided⁷ on one momentous effort at winning the election of 1874. The nadir of extravagance and corruption seemed to have been reached, and national affairs as well state burdens tended to crystallize the sentiment for a strong battle. Alabama was a pawn. Control of the state was desired by each of the political parties, but it may be said that the contest of 1874 was really not between two political parties, but between the Democratic and Conservative party on the one hand and on the other a "mob of negroes" organized and led by a group of Republicans alien to the soil.⁸

The year 1874 was a red letter date in Alabama history.⁹ Almost every important office in the state was to be filled at the fall election of that year. One of the county papers predicted¹⁰ that aspirants for political favor would be as numerous as "free negroes around a mulberry patch." A number of issues were before the people, but the chief one centered in the race question. If the negroes were defeated it would mean the ousting of the Radical party from control for negroes constituted a majority of that party.¹¹ Politics must be righted before business could be improved. Another issue always before the people and the press was the question of the state debt. That is, how the more than \$30,000,000 claims against the state should be settled. "Repudiation, or no Repudiation" became the cry. Most of the papers, with wisdom, urged that as few issues as possible be propounded and that the idea of Repudiation should be

⁵ Brown, pp. 278-9.

Due largely to fraudulent railroad bonds, general extravagance and speculation, the state's debt had jumped from about \$7,000,000 in 1868 to \$32,000,000 in 1874. See detailed account of "Railroad Legislation and Frauds" in Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, pp. 587-605.

⁶ H. A. Herbert, *Why the Solid South*, pp. 64, 67; W. L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, p. 579, and references cited.

⁷ Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 761.

⁸ DuBose, Article No. 17, in *Age-Herald*, April 6, 1913.

⁹ DuBose, Article No. 6, in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 7, 1913.

¹⁰ Conecuh-Escambia *Star*, Feb. 20, 1874.

¹¹ *Montgomery Advertiser*, March 3, 1874; *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1874.

rejected, the term "Compromise" being preferable.¹² But there could be no hope of compromise without a Democratic victory. Already money lenders were shunning the state, regarding it as unsafe to entrust their money to a state controlled by illiterate voters and profiteering office holders.¹³

Who would be the standard bearer? Who could be depended upon to lead the state from its benighted condition? A Moses was needed. Success in the campaign would require the best man and the best organization. This meant that the thousands of potential voters in the hill counties must be aroused and brought to the polls. Many of these, through sheer indifference, had not voted since the war. The Democratic nominee must be able to harmonize all interests, which meant that more than usual consideration must be given to the locality from which the nominee came. It was a fight between 'black' and 'white' counties, i.e., between black-belt, aristocratic,¹⁴ Bourbon counties and the hill counties, filled chiefly with whites, and all thoughtful men realized that the black belt as the dominant political section of the state must now grant some concessions to the white sections not so bothered with the negro.

The press of one section after another fell in line with the idea of naming George Smith Houston, "the Bald Eagle of the Mountains," as the one man able to meet the emergency and rally all sections to the Democratic and Conservative standard, and lead the ship of state from the rocks upon which it had so long been stranded.¹⁵ Others might be personal favorites for governor, but he was the expedient, available man to redeem the state.¹⁶

¹² *Advertiser*, Feb. 13 and March 18, 1874; *Southern Argus*, March 24, 1874.

¹³ *Southern Argus*, March 31, 1874.

The executive committee of the Democratic party in its meeting in Montgomery, February 26, 1874, set July 29 for the state convention, agreed upon the apportionment of delegates to each county, and urged the county committees to organize and get ready for the convention. Robert Tyler, Chairman of the State Executive Committee, said the state was in a lamentable plight under the rule or misrule of the Radical party, harassed and degraded at home, disrespected and distrusted abroad. (*Advertiser*, Feb. 27, 1874; Herbert, *Solid South*, p. 62.)

¹⁴ *Advertiser*, Feb. 13, 1874.

¹⁵ *Advertiser*, Feb. 11 and March 17, 1874; *Greensboro Beacon*, March 13, 1874.

¹⁶ Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 782.

Houston was a native of Tennessee, who had moved to Athens, Alabama, in his early days where he practiced law, and afterward

The Democratic and Conservative convention met in Montgomery Monday, July 29, where George S. Houston was nominated for governor by acclamation and without opposition.¹⁷ His nomination "was the echo of the united voices of the whole people." It was a concession to the white counties.¹⁸

The Republican state convention was held in Montgomery in August, 1874, where a small number of whites and many negroes amid fiery speeches, renominated Governor Lewis, Lieutenant Governor McKinstry and most of the incumbents.¹⁹

As November 3 approached²⁰ the political situation became more tense. Political orators labored to corral the voters, urging them especially in hill counties—for the white vote in the black belt was comparatively small and the big task for the Democrats lay in the hill counties—to forget their lethargy, and indifference and go to the polls and cast a vote for humanity's sake. There

served prominently twenty years as Congressman, resigning when the state seceded in 1861. He was a state-rights man but opposed secession. His sympathies however were with the South. In 1865-6 the legislature elected Houston and Governor L. E. Parsons to the U. S. Senate but they were not seated. (Brown, *Alabama*, p. 281; Willis, Brewer, *Alabama History*, p. 198; E. A. Alderman, *Life of J. L. M. Curry*, pp. 151-2; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 264; *Advertiser*, April 8, 1874; DuBose, Article No. 4, in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 2, 1913.)

¹⁷ His nomination "was but the echo of the united voices of the whole people." It was a concession to the white counties. (*Advertiser*, Feb. 10, 1874; DuBose in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 5, 1913; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 51, Smith and Deland, *Alabama*, p. 51.)

¹⁸ On the seventh ballot after a spirited contest, Robert F. Ligon, an "Old Time Whig" lawyer of Macon was named for lieutenant governor, and a complete state ticket, including justices of the supreme court was named. (Brown, *Alabama*, p. 281; *Advertiser*, August 8, 1874; *Blue Book*, 1922, p. 10.)

¹⁹ *Advertiser*, June 5 and 30, 1874; *Ibid.*, Sept. 2, 1874; DuBose, Article No. 6, in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 7, 1913.

The Convention adopted a platform especially demanding civil rights, that the colored race should be admitted to all schools on an equal basis with the whites, that their political, civil and social rights should not be abridged, that the new amendments were being violated, that the negroes were still embarrassed by race, color and previous condition of servitude. The Democrats were charged with having ruined the state's credit for, they said, it was good in 1870 when Governor Smith gave over the governorship to Lindsay, a Democrat; likewise the Democrats were accused of the murder of many Republicans, especially negroes, and with threats and abuses against the negroes.

²⁰ *Advertiser*, Sept. 26, 1874; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 264; Herbert, *Solid South*, p. 64; DuBose, Article No. 21, in *Age-Herald*, April 23, 1913; Fleming, *Civil War*, pp. 786-8; Brown, *The Lower South* p. 112.

were at the bottom matters of difference among Democrats themselves. It had long been rumored that the black belt had held political dominance²¹ over the white counties and had received most of the offices and that the latter now deemed it their opportune time to assert themselves and demand a greater share in the government. Many citizens of the hill counties, who had had no slaves and were not interested in slaves in earlier days, charged that slavocracy and whigocracy of the black belt forced secession and war on the state. Now that the black belt was in the throes of negro and Radical power and crying for help and rescue by the white counties, some of the latter doubtless enjoyed the revenge they were getting. Some felt possibly that they might as well continue to experience hard times and devastation under alien rule as to relieve the black-belt politicians and thus perpetuate the wrongs of the past and get the little end of the game.

The campaign was bitter between the two state parties. The air became²² charged with political fervor on the eve of the state and congressional election, November 3. "The hour of deliverance" was at hand; they should "strike while the iron was hot." The election returns showed that Houston and the entire Democratic ticket had been victorious.²³ Houston led the state²⁴ ticket with 107,117 against 93,928 for Governor D. P. Lewis.

A study of the election²⁵ figures shows that the white counties gave the Democratic ticket large majorities, thus relieving the black belt, while the 'black' counties themselves went for Lewis with about the same majorities as in 1872. Thus in 1874 these hill counties rallied most excellently in behalf of white supremacy, just as, two decades later, under the spur of the Alliance and the

²¹ Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 781.

²² DuBose in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 7, April 16, 1913; Herbert, *Solid South*, p. 61.

²³ *Advertiser*, Sept. 19, 1874; Sept. 25, 1874; Sept. 22, 1874; Oct. 10, 1874; DuBose, Article No. 6, in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 17, 1913; DuBose Article No. 37, in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 9, 1913; *Mobile Daily Tribune*, Nov. 3, 1874; *Advertiser*, November 11, 1874; Miller, *Alabama*, pp. 264-5; DuBose, Article No. 22, in *Age-Herald*, April 28, 1913; DuBose, Article No. 9, in *Age-Herald*, March 2, 1913.

²⁴ *Advertiser*, Nov. 22, 1874; DuBose, Article No. 8, in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 16, 1913; Herbert, *Solid South*, p. 61; Fleming, *Civil War* p. 795.

²⁵ *Advertiser*, Aug. 2, 1874; *Advertiser*, Aug. 19, 1874; DuBose No. 8 in *Age Herald*, Feb. 16, 1913; DuBose, Article No. 22, in *Age-Herald*, April 28, 1913.

Populist party, with Captain Kolb as spokesman, they again polled a large vote and for six years turned²⁶ the state topsy turvy.

The election of 1874 separated²⁷ forever from the life of Alabama the *motif* of reconstruction, "planted there by the Washington government." This election returned white supremacy to the state and drove, temporarily, from political power carpet-bagger, scalawag, and negro.

Thus the first, or military, period of reconstruction, covering ten years, ended in failure in 1874, and Houston's election ushered in the second phase of reconstruction and marked clearly the difference between the preceding ten years of Federal domination, with the elections by the U. S. army, and the subsequent²⁸ twenty-six years "when elections, state and Federal, were determined by party action *favorable* to the *absolute, unconstitutional and unavoidable* dominance of the whites in government."

November 24, three weeks after the election, Mr. Hous-

²⁶ DuBose, Article No. 9, in *Age-Herald*, March 2, 1913; *Advertiser*, Sept. 11, 1874.

²⁷ Brown, *Alabama*, p. 280; J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, Vol. VII, p. 112; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 266; DuBose, Article No. 15, in *Age-Herald*, March 27, 1913.

The Democrats elected were: W. H. Forney and B. B. Lewis, Congressmen at large; G. W. Hewitt, J. H. Caldwell, J. N. Williams and Tail Bradford. The two Republicans were Charles Hays and Jere Haralson. Hays was a former slave owner. Haralson had been born a slave in Georgia in 1836, came to Alabama and was freed during the war. He was twice elected to the state legislature before going to Congress. (*Iron Age*, April 20, 1876). There were several contests over the results of the vote for Congressmen. Likewise, a Congressional committee came to Alabama, and investigated without worthwhile results, the election riots which were said to have occurred in Barbour, Mobile, Sumter and other countries. (*Advertiser*, Dec. 19, 1874; DuBose, Article No. 19, in *Age-Herald*, April 16, 1913; DuBose, Article No. 27 in *Age-Herald*, May 12, 1913.)

²⁸ DuBose, Article No. 10, in *Age-Herald*, March 5, 1913; DuBose, Article No. 28, in *Age-Herald*, May 17, 1913; Brown, *Lower South* p. 258.

The election of 1874 initiated not only the constitution of 1875 but also that of 1901, and thus placed in motion the machinery by which the final recovery of "normal political life" in Alabama was accomplished by the constitution of 1901 which, by its property or educational qualifications for suffrage, as administered by Democratic Boards of Registrars, was practically equivalent to the disfranchisement of the colored voter and his almost entire elimination from politics of the state. (DuBose, in *Age-Herald*, March 27, 30, 1913; Herbert, *The Solid South*, p. 65; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 300)

ton was inaugurated²⁹ as governor of the state—for all practical purposes the first Democratic governor in a decade. Upon taking the oath of office he delivered a brief, businesslike address, saying that he and his party were glad to have a chance to undertake the arduous task of restoring the state government to its normal condition; all were loyal to the United States; let all be loyal to the state government, discountenancing whatever might tend toward dissension and lack of united, harmonious effort. He would undertake to see that the laws were faithfully and impartially executed, the rights of all citizens without regard to race, color or previous condition being duly guarded and protected. He hoped the legislature would encourage interests tending to develop the state for the people's welfare.³⁰

The legislature, with a majority of Democrats, convened at Montgomery November 16 and the leaders in both houses were eager to show their courage to stand for the undoing of the chaotic conditions in Alabama. A motion came from each house calling for a constitutional convention to abolish the constitution of 1868 made under military rule.³¹

Unexpected opposition to the call of a convention developed in many portions of the state. A howl arose from nearly all county newspapers, and black-belt weeklies vied with white-county weeklies. The Republicans and negroes were strongly against the convention idea. The fight for a convention was waged largely by the state Democratic executive committee and a few of the state dailies.³² The gist of the opposition to the consideration of the question of a "lawyers' " convention at that particular time seems to have been due to: (1) the fear of further interference—fear of Federal bayonets; (2) the desire of many, after the triumph of the Democrats in 1874, to let well enough alone; (3) expense of a convention; (4) fear of discord and strife at home; and (5) fear of defeat of the Democrats at the polls.³³ The

²⁹ DuBose, Article No. 14, in *Age-Herald*, March 23, 1913, J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 287.

³⁰ J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 290; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 281.

³¹ DuBose, Article No. 21, in *Age-Herald*, April 25, 1913, J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 291, Brown, *Alabama*; Herbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 *et. seq.*

³² DuBose, in *Age-Herald*, April 25 and May 1, 1913; Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 797; *Mobile Daily Tribune*, March 14, 19, and 21, 1875; DuBose, Article No. 23, in *Advertiser* July 3, 10, 18, 1875; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 349.

constitution of 1868 had so many defects that it was thought impossible to cure them by amendments. The act providing a referendum on the call of a constitutional convention passed the legislature March 19, 1875. Delegates were elected August 3, under the new election law, at the same time the question was voted for calling of a convention, and these delegates to the convention assembled³⁴ in Montgomery from September 6, 1875 till October 2. In less than one month it adopted a new constitution. After a forceful campaign it was ratified by the overwhelming majority of 56,445 votes.

The future history of the state, even though now under a Democratic governor, would depend upon what the legislators did. It was for them to make possible legal changes. True to expectations,³⁷ the Democratic administration of 1874-76, set straight about putting the commonwealth in order on a safe and businesslike basis. A general housecleaning was imperative. "Economic retrenchment, honesty and reform" were the watchwords of the session. Considering the conditions the general

³³ Smith and DeLand, *Northern Alabama*, p. 52; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 267; *Mobile Daily Tribune*, March 13 and 19, 1875; DuBose, Article No. 26, in *Age-Herald*, May 3, 1875; *Advertiser*, Feb. 15, 1874.

³⁴ *Advertiser*, October 5, 1875; *Mobile Daily Tribune*, March 13, 1875.

The convention was composed of a total of 99 delegates, as follows: (1) Democrats, 80; Radicals, 12; Independent Democrats, 7. The list contained former as well as future Congressmen, Governors and Senators. Leroy Pope Walker of Huntsville, prominent son of the president of the first state constitutional convention (1819), was unanimously acclaimed president. (*Iron Age*, Sept. 9 and 23 and Oct. 14, 1875; *Advertiser* Sept. 7, Nov. 17, Dec. 2, 1875; August 4, 1875 and August 10, 1875; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 267; DuBose Article No. 24, in *Age-Herald*, May 3, 1913; Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 297.)

³⁵ *Iron Age*, Oct. 14, 1875 and Nov. 15, 1875; *Advertiser*, October 3, 1875; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 268; *Mobile Daily Tribune*, June 16, 1875. Careful calculation showed that the annual financial saving due to the new constitution to say nothing of the restored confidence and prospective saving would approximate a million dollars. The difference between the constitutional conventions of 1861 and 1875 was that the former was called to take the state "clear out of the union," whereas the latter was to take the state "clear back into the union." (*Advertiser*, August 26, 1875.)

³⁶ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 266; DuBose, in *Age-Herald*, May 5, 1913; *Ibid.*, No. 20, April 22, 1913.

³⁷ The debt commission, with Governor Houston as chairman finally agreed upon a "compromise" with the state's bondholders whereby the obligations were reduced from \$32,000,000 to \$10,000,000. The members of the commission and a majority of the

assembly of 1875 accomplished wonders, the three outstanding acts being (1) the establishment of a committee to investigate the election of Senator George Spencer in 1872; (2) an act providing for a popular referendum on a state constitutional convention; and (3) an act establishing a state debt commission to effect plans³⁸ for liquidating the financial claims against the state. Senator Spencer retained his seat, but the other two tasks here mentioned were performed. The new constitution was considered a great improvement over its predecessor. The debt commission did its work to the satisfaction of a majority of the populace.³⁹

Good government was emphasized as the very first want of the state. With the dethronement of the Republican party, its successor had ample opportunity to try out its hand at fulfilling its elaborate list of pledges and the legislature enacted many wholesome laws within the next ten years. After 1874 the Republican party fell apart of its own weight, antagonistic factions springing up to divide and weaken⁴⁰ it. In the 'eighties, despite opinions to the contrary, it has been said that no state was ever freer from boss rule and one-man power.⁴¹ The negro vote in Alabama was a confusion to the Democrats and no real aid to the Republicans. Although considerable in quantity it was abnormal and never an effective, usable agency. At times a considerable sprinkling of the colored vote went to the Democrats.⁴² But the whites were obsessed with the idea that the negro's new political power must ever be curbed.

people regarded the "compromise" as just and fair to both debtor and creditor. Yet an acrimonious fight was waged in the legislature by some who wished a larger "repudiation." The Democratic party came near splitting over the question. Regardless of the ethics of the case, the "settlement" aided materially in restoring the state's financial credit. Bonds which had no sale in 1874 were by 1880 quoted at par. The literature on the public debt question is voluminous. See Fleming's *Civil War*, Herbert's *Solid South*, Messages of the governors, *House and Senate Journals*, *Auditors' and Treasurers' Reports*; *Report of Public Debt Commission*, and Histories of Alabama by Brown, DuBose, Owen, Miller, and daily papers covering the period.

³⁹ *Advertiser*, April 17, 1886.

⁴⁰ DuBose, No. 31, May 28, 1913; Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 798.

⁴¹ DuBose, No. 31, in *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1913. Houston served as governor 1874-78; Cobb, 1878-82; O'Neal, 1882-86; Seay, 1886-90; Jones, 1890-94; Oates, 1894-96; Johnston, 1896-1900—all Democrats. Oates refused re-election.

⁴² Brown, *Alabama*, p. 299; *Advertiser* Nov. 7, 15, 1884; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 280.

Under the Democratic custom of honoring a successful official with re-election at the end of his first term, the Democratic governors succeeded regularly, in normal order, with merely nominal opposition from the disorganized Republican party from 1874 to 1890. With Houston's four years over in 1878, he was succeeded in turn by three other Democrats, Cobb, O'Neal and Seay each being re-elected. Not only the governors but the entire state administration, and with almost no exception the county officers as well as Congressmen were uniformly Democrats. With the exception of a continual though insignificant independent movement and some disturbance within the Democratic party in opposition to Governor O'Neal led by President Bragg of the railroad commission, supremacy of the "white man's party" was never endangered between 1874 and 1890.

CHAPTER II

ANTECEDENTS OF POPULISM:

BASES OF AGRARIAN GRIEVANCES

The Populist party was a product of economic discontent. It is the purpose of the next few pages to portray some of the conditions in Alabama which led perforce to organized economic and social effort as a means toward ameliorating the distress among agricultural workers during the 'seventies and 'eighties. Then, still dissatisfied with the results of coöperative enterprises, it was an easy and natural transition to the political arena.¹ Non-political associations were the entering wedge to political action. As already stated, the basis of Populism in Alabama was not wholly economic, not entirely a debtors' movement, but largely racial. This factor will become clearer as the story develops.

The fifteen years following 1875 was a queer period in Alabama history. During the first years the state was trying to find itself, to rebuild its economic, social and political foundations under the regimen of the traditionally dominant party. But in spite of manifestations of popular optimism, all was not wholly satisfactory. The decade of the 'eighties was a period of city building and industrial awakening. It was the initiation of the industrial revolution in Alabama. Coal and iron fields² were being opened, factories started, new railroads built, and old ones expanded.

Some of the crop years were good, others poor, but the prices were at the bottom, due partly to temporary overproduction, and the whole country seemed to be in a state of turmoil. With the "Boom Period" in cities and industries, Alabama began to take on a new complexion. The life of the state became more diversified, the contrast being more striking between the agricultural areas and the newly developed mineral section of the central portion of the state,³ with Birmingham, Anniston and other

¹DuBose, Article No. 21, in *Age-Herald*, Apr. 23, 1913.

²Brown, *Alabama*, p. 303; Brown, *Lower South*, p. 163; Ethel Armes, *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*, *passim*.

³Brown, *Alabama*, p. 293; *Age-Herald*, May 22, 1889; Berney, *Hand Book of Alabama*, pp. 456-490.

towns springing into cities. With the rise of cities came a new labor problem, different from the agricultural laborer. While the farmer with a super-abundant crop, due somewhat to improved machinery and farm methods⁴ faced economic non-prosperity, the industrialist was temporarily confronted with a considerable degree of prosperity. Here was a cause for discontent, especially on the part of the farmers, who felt themselves less protected by the government than the industrial group who, because of tariff duties on coal and iron, could pay larger wages than the farmer could pay.

Just following the panic of 1873 there was established in the newly chartered city the *Iron Age*, a newspaper which boosted the industrial possibilities of the state and upheld the tariff as against the *Advertiser's* free-trade policy for the cotton interests of the black belt.⁵ It is quite interesting to watch the transition in such men as Senators Morgan and Pugh from a free-trade policy to a medium-tariff basis as the political power of the mineral section developed. This itself was one possible cause for a weakening of the oldline Democratic power. The tariff question was prominent in the national election of 1884, and, although Alabama was Democratic, it was somewhat "mixed" on the tariff question.⁶ The Jefferson county Democrats in convention in 1884 endorsed protection upon coal and iron. The smoke of twenty furnaces, many factories, the thousands of tons of black diamonds, the hundreds of miles of new railroads, and the millions of money beginning to pour into the state from outside capitalists to develop its resources would, it was urged, speak louder than the voices of Senator Morgan and the *Advertiser* against protection.⁷

The period was not a "Boom Era" for the farmers. Quite different from it. The rise of industrial centers caused a rush of country population, especially negroes, from the farms to the towns. This produced considerable hardship in the black belt and other agricultural regions

⁴DuBose, Article No. 62, in *Age-Herald*, Aug. 20, 1913. Brown, *Lower South*, p. 203.

⁵DuBose, Article No. 59, in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 10, 1913; Berney, *Hand Book*, p. 463.

⁶*Iron Age*, Jan. 24, 1884 and July 28, 1887; Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 769; Berney, *Hand Book*, p. 54. Iron was now characterized as King; coal as Queen; and cotton, fruits and marble only less beloved members of Alabama's Royal Family.

⁷*Iron Age*, May 21, 1883; *Iron Age*, Oct. 23, 1884; *Iron Age*, July 28, 1887; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 283; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 303.

by making labor, already the short factor in production, still scarcer. Thousands of whites and blacks had emigrated to other states between 1870 and 1880, and despite numerous haphazard efforts and continual propaganda, scarcely any immigrants came into the state.⁸ Agricultural land fell in price, adding to the spirit of unrest of the agricultural element and accentuating the growth of clubs, particularly the Farmers' Alliance which began spreading over the state in the late 'eighties. As yet this dissatisfaction was almost entirely economic, not having acquired its political significance.⁹

Efforts at moral integrity and sound economic and social life were laid upon the wreckage inherited from fifteen years of war and reconstruction. In more than one respect foundations were being laid for a New Era, with its political and social aspects not less noticeable than its industrial and economic effects. Yet numerous cross currents were at work and bound to create trouble later.

Naturally, the Democrats boasted of party achievements and minimized all efforts by other parties. Once in power propaganda was used to remain in power. Yet, after all, the dominant party itself, as will soon appear, was not entrenched on an absolutely rock foundation.¹⁰ As in the case of the diseased apple one defect followed another, until the basic fabric was weakened and jeopardized. Political morality in Alabama was not perfect in either party. The Democratic party was said to be a party of honest principles, but its practices and policies, shaped to meet existing exigencies, were not always above suspicion.¹¹

Although the United States has maintained steadily the two-party system, there have been numerous third parties, particularly since the Civil War, which spread easily from one state to another. Alabama has not been exempt from third party efforts. The war, nationally speaking, was fought under the domination of a Republican administration.¹² The Republican party, so the story ran, saved the Union. The Democratic party was regarded as disloyal and was discredited. Not until over two decades after the war did the Democratic party elect

⁸*Iron Age*, July 28, 1887.

⁹Otken, *op. cit.*, Chap. XI; *Iron Age*, Oct. 23, 1884.

¹⁰Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 781.

¹¹*Iron Age*, Dec. 10, 1879.

¹²Rhodes, *History of U. S.*, V, *passim*.

a president. Yet in Alabama, only ten years were necessary¹³ to return that party to power.

The first decade following the war was concerned fundamentally with political matters. Economic questions,¹⁴ except in an incidental and subsidiary form, being overshadowed by the political aspects, but the restoration of political stability once under way, the people's minds were turned more decidedly to economic considerations, more particularly the money question. Hence the rise of the Greenbackers as a third party.¹⁵ The Greenback party had its origin in the financial distresses of the country, its principles being little more than declarations of policies which its adherents thought expedient for the relief of the laboring masses. It grew out of the soil of Grangerism, now on the wane. Based thus upon purely economic foundations, its existence as a party would most likely be ephemeral, subject to termination by a change in the economic conditions which might be altered by a change of policy of the national administration, bringing financial relief by the equalization of values between gold and currency or otherwise, as perhaps by abundant harvests.¹⁶ Any means whereby economic embarrassment might be relieved would tend to undermine such a party based wholly upon one issue. The chief tenets of this third party seem to have been a demand for the carriage of gold and silver upon the same footing; the issuance of ample money—based solely upon the government's "fiat" for business and labor—opposition to and suppression of the national banks, allowing no corporations but the government itself to issue or coin money or legal tender for all debts. Government bonds were to be taxed and an income tax established.

The Independents, or Greenbacks—for the names were apparently interchangeable—played a rather significant though by no means formidable part in Alabama, their

¹³Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 798; *Advertiser*, March 19, 1880. After 1877, with the bolstering arm of the Federal troops gone, the Republican party in Alabama became rather effectively submerged. At times it failed to put out a state ticket, its general policy being to fuse its forces with any disaffected, independent group against the Democrats. Not infrequently was the party aided by money and propaganda from the Republican national headquarters. The Democratic press continued to heap abuse upon the Republicans as if they were still at the height of their power.

¹⁴See Rhodes, *History of the U. S.*, V, *passim*.

¹⁵*Iron Age*, Sept. 18, 1878; *Nixon Populist Movement in Iowa*, pp. 21, 23.

¹⁶*Iron Age*, Dec. 5, 1879; *Iron Age*, Sept. 18, 1878; Nov. 16, 1882.

influence being felt even after 1884, the date of the last attempt of the Greenbacks in the national elections. Some of the strongest promoters of the party were J. N. Carpenter of Birmingham, A. H. Brittian of the *Huntsville Advocate*, and W. M. Lowe of Huntsville. The Jefferson county *Independent* was a booster for the discontented followers of this party, claiming 1,500 Greenbackers in Jefferson county alone, to say nothing of the strength especially in the northern tier of counties.¹⁷ The *Iron Age* thought the number in Jefferson county in 1878 was not over 300 exclusive of Republicans and negroes. In June, 1878, a county Greenback convention was held in Birmingham with only a small number of delegates in attendance. W. M. Lowe was elected to Congress from the eighth Congressional district in 1878 as an Independent, supporting the Greenback movement. He had formerly been a Democrat, a man of means and influence, and his ability and personality attracted to him a following sufficient to defeat his Democratic opponent, W. W. Garth. It was claimed however that he was elected not by Democrats but by Republicans and negroes.

A rather important convention¹⁹ of the Greenback-Labor party was held in Montgomery, June 24, 1880, with J. N. Carpenter, president. The convention discussed means for more effective state and national organization, as well as measures for the "political, financial and industrial relief to a misrepresented, ring-ruled, caucus-ridden, tax-burdened people of the whole state." A rather suggestive platform was adopted by this "People's Anti-Bourbon" party. The chief planks of the platform to catch all discontented classes were: (1) It endorsed the candidates and reaffirmed the platform of the Greenback-Labor party adopted at Chicago, June 12; (2) denounced the state administration for changing the time-honored election laws so as to open the door for fraud and perjury and demanded the restoration of the former laws with the "sacred right of suffrage," with "a fair election and an honest count"; (3) denounced the common school system as being inefficient and improperly administered financially and otherwise; (4) denounced the odious and inhumane system of convict labor; (5) demanded that all property bear equally the burdens of taxation, and denounced all ring rule, favoritism and

¹⁷*Iron Age*, July 10, 1876; July 3, 1878.

¹⁸DuBose, Article No. 38 in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1913.

¹⁹*Advertiser*, June 25, 1880; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 293.

class legislation, protected under the state Democratic administration, towards railroads, banks, insurance companies and other monied corporations.

The Republicans²⁰ had no regular ticket but supported the "Anti-Bourboners" who, in their first campaign, nominated a full state ticket for 1880 headed by the Reverend James M. Pickens of Lawrence county for governor. R. W. Cobb's majority²¹ over him, however, was 92,545.

Fleming says²² it was in 1880 that the Democrats came into complete control of the black belt. The negroes and other Republicans were ordered by their Republican leaders to vote for the Greenback candidates, but failing to understand the scheme, did not poll their full strength and lost whatever chances they had. There was no Greenback ticket in many black-belt counties.

Pickens' vote of 42,343 was a sign of future trouble. He got a heavy vote in several counties. Cobb's large vote of 134,911 showed that he received a considerable support from the negroes. In 1874 Houston's vote in the black-belt counties was unusually small, but in 1880, Cobb got almost double what Houston received in the black belt. This was probably due to the fact that there was no excitement and no strong opposition, the Republican organization being defunct in 1880. Governor Cobb had no difficulty in defeating James L. Sheffield of Marshall, Greenback candidate for governor in 1882. Sheffield's nomination had been endorsed by the Republican convention at Montgomery.²³ A negro presided and the negroes were largely in the majority, and opposed endorsing the Independent candidate, but the few whites in the convention had their way.

The warmest²⁴ contest between Greenbacks and Democrats was in the eighth Congressional district between General Wheeler and Congressman Lowe, a Greenback member of the 46th Congress, 1879-1881. Each claimed the victory but Wheeler was seated. Colonel Lowe was mentioned for governor in 1882, but died²⁵ that autumn. The papers then said that "the independent movement

²⁰*Advertiser*, Sept. 14, 1880 and May 23, 1880, Brown, *Alabama*, p. 292.

²¹*Advertiser*, Sept. 14, 23, 1880; Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 798.

²²DuBose, Article No. 46, in *Age-Herald*, Aug. 4, 1913; Berney, *Hand Book*, p. 540; Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 798.

²³DuBose, Article No. 50, in *Age-Herald*, August 18, 1913; *Advertiser*, May 3, 1889.

²⁴Miller, *Alabama*, p. 274; *Advertiser*, June 25, 1880; *Iron Age*, Feb. 9, 1881; *Advertiser*, Nov. 30, 1880.

in northern Alabama died with its leader." He was called the life and soul of the party.

In 1884, the Greenback-Independent-Labor group under the name of the "People's Anti-Bourbon Party," composed, as one paper said, of political sore heads, put out a state ticket with Charles P. Lane, Madison county editor for governor,²⁶ but the results in 1884 like those in the elections of 1886 and 1888, were negligible.²⁷ O'Neal received 143,229 while Lane received only 1106 votes.

By March, 1888 the Labor party of Alabama was "full fledged" but after a state convention in Montgomery where notice was served on the old parties, the Blair Educational Bill endorsed, and the internal revenue laws denounced, they decided not to run a ticket.²⁷ The last campaign²⁸ in which the Greenbackers put out a state ticket was in 1890. A state convention of twenty-five delegates of the party was held in Birmingham, July 8. The convention closed at 7 P.M. with a general, old-time handshaking. Heading the full state ticket was Dr. L. C. Coulson, Baptist preacher of Scottsboro, nominee for governor. A long letter of acceptance from Dr. Coulson was read and much enthusiasm prevailed as of olden times, "when the Greenback party was a power in politics and an institution national in scope." More protection for the people and less for the trusts was urged, and frauds, briberies and other corrupt practices of the larger parties were scored.²⁹

Only one of the candidates named in 1890 was from the black belt and Lawrence county which had played so strong a part in the Independent movement, sending anti-Democratic members to the state legislature, took little part in the campaign of 1890. In fact, the Greenbackers of that county, in convention, had already said it was time for the whites to stand together against negro and Republican domination, and many of them pledged their return to the Democratic fold.³⁰ The Greenbackers wished R. F. Kolb, Commissioner of Agriculture, to be their candidate, but he waited, hoping to receive

²⁵*Iron Age*, Oct. 19, 1882; Nov. 16, 1882; *Advertiser*, March 4, 1880; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 362.

²⁶*Iron Age*, July 3, 1884.

²⁷*Ibid*; *Advertiser*, August 24, 1889; DuBose, Article No. 60, in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 12, 1913.

²⁸*Advertiser*, March 24, 1888.

²⁹*Advertiser*, July 9, 1890; *Age-Herald*, July 9, 1890.

³⁰*Age-Herald*, July 9, 1890; *Advertiser*, July 15, 1890.

the gubernatorial nomination at the Democratic state convention.³¹ In the early 'nineties there seems to have been a subsidence of the party as such, and a merger with the People's or Populist party which began to function. The story of the haphazard Independent party in Alabama has been told with considerable detail, not because of its importance *per se*, but with the purpose of showing the political-mindedness of the state throughout the decade previous to the organization of the Populist party. With the addition of a new source of complaint here and there the heaven was being prepared for a more powerful political schism and upheaval than this independent group itself manifested. From the year 1880 dated a division of the white vote of the state.³² Greenbackism³³ in Alabama was a significant experiment in political discontent, and gave impetus to Populism as its successor in the state.³⁴

It has been³⁵ said that the South in 1860 was the richest part of the country; in 1870, the poorest; in 1880, it showed signs of improvement; and by 1890 was regaining the position of 1860. Statistics show the tremendous change in the relative position of the farming class of 1860 and of the 'eighties and 'nineties. It was an almost complete reversal of positions from the top rung of the social and economic ladder to the nethermost rung. Before the war, the agricultural class had been prominent and prosperous, and in fact furnished from its ranks most of the lawyers, teachers, doctors, newspapermen and clergymen. The farmer was a leader in local and state politics and his patronage might make or mar the fortune of the merchant who occupied an inferior role in society. But what changes came to pass within the three decades following Appomatox! The large plantation had been split into many smaller farms; the war had practically ruined him who owned land, for with his labor gone, with unprecedented public and private debts and tax burdens, with cotton still the chief crop, but worth less than it cost to produce³⁶ it; with lawyers making big fees serving

³¹ *Advertiser*, July 15, 1890; *Age-Herald*, July 9, 1890.

³² DuBose Article No. 47; in *Age-Herald*, August 6, 1913.

³³ For a full discussion of Greenbackism in another state, see R. C. McCrane, "Ohio and the Greenback Movement," in *Miss Valley Hist. Review*, pp. 526-542, March, 1925.

³⁴ F. E. Haynes designates the Greenback party as the "parent of the free silver party". ("The New Sectionalism," in *Quart. Jr. Econ.*, X, pp. 285 ff. April, 1896.)

³⁵ Herbert, *Solid South*, p. 431.

railroad companies, merchants, and corporations whose profits depended upon the agricultural class,—the farmer had lost his former prestige. This in itself was galling to his pride.

In 1860 Alabama had a population of 964,202, which by 1870 had added only 32,791, making 996,993 inhabitants. This was an increase of only 3.4 per cent, while the per cent increase for the United States was 23. By 1880 with a 27 per cent increase, the state had 1,262,505 inhabitants which had reached 1,513,401 by 1890—a density of 29.5 per square mile.³⁸ This population was 55 per cent white and 45 per cent negro, the bulk of the latter being concentrated in some ten or fifteen of the sixty-six counties.

The total number of acres in farms in the state in 1860 was 19,104,545 (nearly three-fifths of the total acreage), of which 6,385,724 acres were under cultivation. The value of the whole was \$175,824,622, or \$9.20 per acre. Twenty years later (1880) the amount of land in farms had fallen to 18,855,334, with 6,375,706 acres in cultivation, and a total value of only \$78,954,648, or a value of \$4.19 per acre for land and buildings together,³⁹ which was less than half the value in 1860.

By 1890 the acreage in farms,⁴⁰ as well as improved acreage, had gone merely beyond what it was in 1860, and although the population was then one-third larger than in 1860, the value of farms and buildings was only \$111,051,390, or \$5.59 per acre—little more than half that of 1860.

The greatest shrinkage in values was confined to the middle and southern portions of the state. The number of farms, however, had greatly increased with each decade, being 55,128 in 1860; 135,864 in 1880; and 157,772 in 1890. That is, the average size of the Alabama farm in 1860 was 347 acres; 139 in 1880; and 126 acres in 1890.

³⁶ B. B. Kendrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-271; Holland Thompson, *The New South*, *passim*.

³⁷ *Thirteenth Census*, 1910, p. 568; *Tenth Census, Alabama Compendium*, Pt. II, p. 1508. See Otken, *Ills of the South*, Chap. VII; *Report U. S. Sec. Agr.*, 1889, p. 229.

³⁸ *Thirteenth Census*, 1910, *Population*, p. 569; *Official and Statistical Register (Ala.)*, 1903, 1907.

³⁹ *Fourteenth Census, Alabama Compendium*, p. 55. Less than 1 per cent was foreign born in gainful occupations in either 1880 or 1890; approximately 381,000 were farmers. (*Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 394.)

⁴⁰ *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 610; See Otken, *op. cit.*, Chap. IX.

This means that the average farm with farm property in Alabama was valued in 1880-90 at \$704, or about one-fifth its value in 1860, though it was twice as large in 1860. Even in 1900 the value per farm was only \$867, or slightly more than two-thirds that of 1860. The aggregate value of farm property in Alabama advanced between 1870 and 1900, however the acreage value per farm decreased from \$1160 to \$804, or from \$804 to \$603 for "land and buildings." This seeming paradox was due to the rapid increase in the number of farms and the consequent decrease in their size.⁴¹

Approximately half (72,215) of the farms were operated⁴² by owners and managers, the other half (62,649) being operated by some type of tenant. The share tenants in 1880 constituted almost two-thirds of the total number of tenants, but after 1890 the cash tenants predominated in numbers.⁴³

The modern farmer realizes the necessity of adequate farm tools and motive power, but forty years ago, conditions in Alabama were in this respect deplorable. The total value* of farm implements and machinery in 1860 was \$7,433,178, an average of \$135 per farm, while by 1880 these figures had dropped to \$3,788,978 and \$28, being slightly more in 1890, namely, \$4,511,645 for the state and \$29 per farm. This was an average of some 20 cents per acre for farm implements and machinery.⁴⁴

Picture a farm operated effectively with less than \$30 worth of tools and machinery! The total value of the live stock in 1880 was under \$24,000,000. The average value of livestock per farm in 1860 was \$787, four times that of 1890 (\$195). The commissioner of agriculture urged⁴⁵ modern machinery and methods and reported in 1886 that there was no danger of exaggerating the importance of a good team and good implements. But by good implements he did not mean an "out-fit for a fancy

⁴¹ *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 610; *Thirteenth Census (Alabama)*, p. 619.

⁴² *Fourteenth Census (Alabama)*, p. 57; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 590.

⁴³ DuBose, Article No. 32, in *Age-Herald*, June 3, 1913; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 590.

⁴⁴ *Fourteenth Census (Agric. Ala.)*, p. 55; *Thirteenth Census (Alabama)*, p. 619; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 616.

⁴⁵ E. C. Betts, Address before State Agric. Soc., Aug. 18, 1886, p. 11.

* For all these values, gold values were computed on 80 per cent of the currency values reported. (*Fourteenth Census, Agriculture*, p. 55.)

farmer" as "sulky plows, gang plows and self-binders." While the teams in some counties were fine, the commissioner said that in at least two-thirds of the state, single oxen—many of them mere calves—constituted a "large proportion of the plough stock," and the remainder consisted for the greater part of a class of mules which before the war could have found no purchasers among Alabama farmers.

In 1860 the state produced upwards of 33,000,000 bushels of corn which had fallen to half that amount in 1870, but had climbed back to approximately 30,000,000 in 1880. There were nearly two million hogs in the state in 1860—nearly two per capita—while in 1880 the number had fallen to less than one and one-third millions with more than one and one-fourth million inhabitants.⁴⁶ This means that during the 'eighties the state was producing perhaps half of its meat supply, but probably 90 per cent of this was in the hands of the land owners, while the other half of the population—tenants who were liable to be forced to change their locality every year or so—found it impossible to produce their own food supplies beyond a scant supply of milk and a few of the most inferior vegetables.⁴⁷ Meat and bread constituted the major diet of the farmer and both of those he failed to produce in sufficient quantities for home consumption. The balance he was forced to buy from the middle West, and both were frequently of poor quality by the time they reached the consumer. Carloads of work mules were also brought in from the West.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding much complaint against the railroads, farmers found it cheaper to buy Western corn and transport it to Alabama, especially when both corn and consumer were near the railroad, than to buy in Alabama, whenever possible, and transport long distances by wagon. Most of those needing corn had to buy on credit through a merchant, and the latter found it cheaper to buy in bulk by railroad than collect it in small quantities here and there in the country.⁴⁹

When emancipation had "swept out of existence nine-

⁴⁶ *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 750; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 7; see B. F. Riley "Alabama As It Is," p. 111.

⁴⁷ E. C. Betts, *Address*, Aug. 18, 1886. On the entire topic of crops, mortgages, liens and economic conditions in the South, see Fleming, *Civil War*, *passim*.

⁴⁸ Otken, *Ills of the South*; Betts, *Address*, Aug. 18, 1886, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Betts, *Address*, Aug. 18, 1886, p. 8; Hammond, *Cotton Industry*, *passim*.

tenths" of the planters' property, an economic revolution must occur. Labor became an exceedingly vital and distressing problem, and created a condition found in no other section of the country.⁵⁰ It was not a question of surplus labor caused by the influx of immigrants into Alabama. Such never existed, despite almost continuous appeals and schemes for bringing in labor and capital from the North and West.⁵¹

Abundant labor was essential for the production of cotton, and this being produced chiefly in the black belt, made matters worse for it was there that labor was most deranged. The negro was now free and theoretically, though not actually, an equal competitor with the white man.⁵² Not only this, but the new system of farming had caused many uncertainties. Emancipation had left the landlord his land, one of the two most important elements of production, but it had taken his labor, and in so doing had deprived the land of its chief value. Labor, teams, implements, and subsistence were as essential to farming as land, and many became "land poor", being unable to sell their land to pay taxes on it, or to procure even the necessities of life to have the farm operated.⁵³

Instead of forming the landlord's chief capital, the negro, representing a portion of the same labor as before the war, still existed, but as an aspirant to the condition of a farmer and a competitor in the market for the little money that might be obtained even at an exorbitant rate of interest. "The land owner did not have the labor, nor the laborer the land, and neither had teams, implements, subsistence, nor the capital to purchase them," and with humiliation both parties were then forced to procure the required capital from a third party. This led to one of the most extremely burdensome and distressing conditions, as well as one of the most potent causes of the rise of

⁵⁰ Betts, *Address*, August 18, 1886, p. 9; see Morgan, *Wheel and Alliance*, *passim*.

⁵¹ Fleming, *Civil War*, pp. 717, 769; *Acts*, 1886-7, p. 79; *Advertiser*, Feb. 16, 1887. Wide awake Alabamians, including the press, railroads, and such men as J. T. Milner, R. F. Kolb, and John Cullman, continually urged the state to provide an immigration bureau, or to establish some means of drawing people to the state to fill the vacant areas, and to supplant "Roving Alabama"—the numerous whites and blacks who had gone to Arkansas or Texas.

⁵² Betts, before Agric. Soc., August 18, 1886.

⁵³ For the "development of the share system", see Fleming, *Civil War*, pp. 722-734.

Populism, namely, the farm mortgage and crop lien system. Under this system, the land owner as well as laborer, one or both, was forced to give to a third party, usually a merchant, himself often bound to a distant bank or a wholesaler, a mortgage swallowing all present and prospective possessions. At times the landlord himself was both land owner and merchant, or borrowed on land security, and bound his tenant with a paralyzing grip for supplies furnished⁵⁴ at a rate of interest running as high as 100 per cent.

Yet the merchant did not always make a fortune. He was often unscientific and haphazard, and the banker's profit was usually greatest of all. This abominable "Anaconda" mortgage system led not only to failure and distress on the part of the tenant and the landowner, but led likewise to numerous business failures, involving the merchant as the third party and even failures of banks or wholesale dealers which backed the merchant.⁵⁵

Iniquitous lien laws (1867-1885) were passed as a substitute for mere personal notes of the negro tenants and farmers given to merchants for supplies. But merchants now began to require of every farmer to whom they furnished supplies an 'iron-clad' mortgage covering stock, home, farm goods, implements and prospective crops.⁵⁶

More often, however, the farmer,⁵⁷ failing to make enough to cover expenses, grew deeper in debt and soon lost his land, stock and all other possessions to the merchant or some alien purchaser. And to make matters worse, the farmer's negroes, preferring to work for the merchant, out from under supervision, now deserted their farmer landlord to try a merchant prince as a new landlord. The old farmer landlord had become a man of very low status, his former prestige being taken over by the merchant, lawyer, and capitalist. He was the merchant's

⁵⁴ See *Tenth Census*, "Farm Mortgages." Betts, *Address*, Agric. Soc. Aug. 18, 1886; Otken, *Ills of the South*, pp. 33-53. For a vivid description of the effects of the lien system on different classes, see *Iron Age*, Dec. 4, 1884; *Advertiser*, Dec. 15, 1886, Jan. 16, 1878; Hammond, *Cotton Industry*, pp. 141-165; Fleming *Civil War*, pp. 722-734.

⁵⁵ See Hammond, *Cotton Industry*, pp. 120-140. *Mobile Daily Tribune*, Feb. 11, 1875; Otken, pp. 18 ff.

⁵⁶ B. B. Kendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 271; Ernest Gruenig, *These United States*, pp. 27-30; Otken, *Ills*, pp. 53 ff. *Advertiser*, Nov 24, Dec. 22, 1885; *Acts*, 1884-5, p. 67.

⁵⁷ Otken, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 40.

"lien-law slave", and his pride as well as purse was hurt.⁵⁸

Aside from the orgy of wasteful expenditure of public funds following the war, running the state debt to more than thirty millions, and imposing a burden of heavy taxation upon the people for years to come, the credit system used in promoting agriculture was enough to stifle any hope of progress.⁵⁹ Capital was lacking, not only for repairing and rebuilding the agricultural system gone to pieces during the years of war and military reconstruction, but capital and implements were necessary for pitching the yearly crop. This credit system was one of yearly accounts, each year having sufficient evil in itself, and the farmer who fell behind this year could scarcely hope to make it good next year. He did well to hold his own, having enough each Christmas to pay off and to secure credit to launch a new crop. It was an endless cycle. This year's cotton did well to pay this year's debts, not last year's.⁶⁰ Petitions for stay laws were not uncommon. In the words of Jailus Perdue, an eighty-five year old negro, who described it to the author, "The credit and mortgage system was death to the poor man. It was sure to keep him poor."

The system was a gamble⁶¹ from the standpoint of the country storekeeper as well as the farmer. The wager was laid not upon prices but upon the size of the crop, which was liable to be affected by drought, worms and a dozen other variable and often uncontrollable factors. The merchant in the early spring began to make "advances" of tools, seeds, provisions and supplies of all kinds, in return for which the planter mortgaged and gave a lien on his crop for the coming year. The farmer was at a disadvantage. According to Hammond,⁶² fully 90 per cent of Alabama cotton growers were engulfed in the lien system, and three-fourths of all farmers were heavily in debt,⁶³ and bound by mortgages at a high rate

⁵⁸ Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, p. 18 and references cited.

⁵⁹ Otken, *Ills*, Chapters V and VI; *Tenth Census*, Vol. II, Pt. II, p. 156; Wells, *Industrial History*, p. 409; *The New York Times*, Jan. 15, 1881; *Advertiser*, Dec. 25, 1885.

⁶⁰ B. B. Kendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 267; Cf. Brown, *Lower South*, pp. 248 ff.

⁶¹ *Cotton Industry*, p. 155; see E. A. Smith, *Cotton Production*, 1881, 1884 (*Ala. Geol. Survey*).

⁶² Otken, *op. cit.* pp. 12 ff.; *Morgan Wheel and Alliance*, pp. 72, 112.

⁶³ For full details of indebtedness of farmers, amount of mort-

of interest.⁶⁴ Although only one farm out of twenty-two was encumbered by mortgages⁶⁵ in 1890, as shown by the census, this record was far from complete, for many mortgages were not recorded. At any rate the mortgage indebtedness was heavy, particularly in some sections. Alabama⁶⁶ farms were mortgaged to the extent of \$28,762,387, a fourth of the entire value of its farms, and a per capita mortgage indebtedness of \$26.

It required something more than 6 cent cotton to pay 50 to 75 per cent interest on supplies.⁶⁷ Not only was the farmer compelled to stick to one merchant who agreed to furnish him his stock, household goods, and prospective crop and if a land owner, the land itself being bound firmly in the mortgage to the merchant, but the farmer had to do all of his trading with this same agent, for none other would furnish him since his crop and possessions were mortgaged to the merchant. Thus the farmer was not only deprived of competitive bids, enhancing the cost of his purchases, but the merchant actually forced the planter to grow such crops as he might dictate, and this was invariably cotton, readily convertible into money, even though the price be low.⁶⁸

By forcing the farmer to grow cotton, the merchant could sell him his meat and corn at a profit. The merchant was thus able to secure a big rate for his loans, high prices for his commodities, and to a large extent determine the price to be paid for the crop. Such a system discouraged any semblance of diversified crops, such as cereals, animals, and vegetables, which besides being less exhaustive to the land, would make the farmer a more contented and independent agent.⁶⁹ "The one-

gage indebtedness, etc., see *Eleventh Census*, "Farms and Homes"; also *Abstract of Eleventh Census*, "Banks".

⁶⁴ *Eleventh Census*, "Mortgages," pp. 11, 281; *U. S. Senate Report*, 1894-5, Vol. 1, p. 80; Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁶⁵ *Eleventh Census*, "Real Estate and Mortgages," pp. 19, 280; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 287; see G. K. Holmes, "A Decade of Mortgages," in *Annals of Amer. Acad. Polit. and Social Sciences*, pp. 904-918, May, 1894.

⁶⁶ Otken, *Ills.*, pp. 65-95; Morgan, *Wheel and Alliance*, Chaps. III and IV.

⁶⁷ *Literary Digest*, April 7, 1923, established the rate at 75 to 100 per cent. See Morgan and Otken, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁶⁸ For cost of producing cotton, see J. L. Watkins, *The Cost of the Production of Cotton*, pp. 7 ff. Special figures compiled by the Secretary of Agriculture, show the average price of cotton in Alabama for Dec. 1, 1880 at 10 cents; Dec. 1, 1888, 8.5 cents; 1893, 7 cents; 1894, 4.8 cents; 1896, 6.5 cents.

⁶⁹ Wells, *Indust. Hist.*, p. 410; Otken, *Ills.*, pp. 33-53.

crop system was thus perpetuated, the land was impoverished, and the possibility of paying debts was, therefore, rendered still more remote." "Under the circumstances," as Wells says, "it was not difficult to recruit Southern farmers in radical movements."⁷⁰

A special committee of the State Grange had reported as early as 1877 that the greatest evil of the day was the ruinous credit system, and that some way was needed for paying cash to avoid the extortionate interest paid the merchants for 'rations' sold on time.⁷¹ Yet it was eight years before the lien law was repealed.⁷² Commissioner Betts estimated that the excess paid for supplies under the "lien system" above a fair price probably exceeded all losses occasioned by the war, which he estimated at a half billion for Alabama.

The state produced⁷³ nearly a million (989,955) bales of cotton in 1860 (two-thirds of this being produced in the black belt where the negroes were soon freed⁷⁴); less than half that in 1870 (429,482); 699,654 bales in 1880 and 915,210 in 1890. But the price in 1860 averaged nearly 11 cents a pound, or a total value of some fifty million dollars. With less than half a million bales in 1870, the total value, owing to the high average price of about 20 cents a pound was considerably more than in 1860. But after 1870 the bottom fell out of the price of cotton, and the total value for 1880 was probably little over thirty millions,⁷⁵ that is, three-fifths the value of 1860, or a little more than half that for 1870.

The average⁷⁶ cash value per acre of cotton at 10 cents a pound for 1880 was \$18; of corn \$10.91; and wheat \$12.48. Producing less than a bale per acre, and with a ton of fertilizer at \$40—the price of a bale of cotton—

⁷⁰ Wells, *Indust. Hist.*, p. 410; Otken, *Ills*, pp. *passim*.

⁷¹ Culver, *Hand Book*, p. 177; Arnett, *Populist Movement*, p. 61; Hammond, *Cotton Industry*, pp. 164 ff.; Betts, *Address*, Aug. 18, 1886.

⁷² *Advertiser*, Nov. 4, and Dec. 22, 1885.

⁷³ For production of cotton in Alabama by counties 1860-1900, see Fleming, *Civil war*, pp. 804-805; *U. S. Census*; Owen, *Alabama*, I, pp. 410 ff.; see Hammond, *Cotton Industry*, p. 168. For full history of cotton factories and their output, see Owen, *Alabama*, I, pp. 412-415; Berney, *Hand Book*, pp. 475-490; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 670. For grain crops, meat, etc. see *Tenth and Eleventh Censuses*; Otken, *Ills*, p. 99.

⁷⁴ Culver, *Hand Book*, p. 77.

⁷⁵ *N. Y. Journal of Commerce*, 1875; *Mobile Daily Tribune*, Sept. 10, 1875; *Advertiser*, Sept. 22, 1874.

⁷⁶ E. C. Betts, *Address*, Aug. 18, 1886.

it is readily seen that cotton production was a heavy loss to the producer, and conditions grew worse annually.

Colonel L. L. Polk⁷⁷ of North Carolina, prominent Allianceman and editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, gave some convincing statistics as to the farmers' sad plight during this period—figures which throw more light on the reasons for the entrance of the Alliance into politics.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST MONOPOLIES AND CURRENCY.

No matter what the actual facts may have been, the farmer was obsessed with the idea that he was down-trodden and depressed; that notwithstanding all other classes were dependent upon his toil, he was made to bear more than his just share of the burden of government.⁷⁸ He was in the majority in numbers, and was the real producer, yet his wealth in worldly goods was far below that of other classes.⁷⁹ Moreover, all of his property—his acres, household goods and mule—could never escape the eye of the tax assessor and tax collector while the banker's or railroad man's shares of stock were easily concealed. The state of society seemed to work against the farmer. Other classes were organized and now it was urged that only through permanent, cohesive organization could the agriculturist cope with other classes. The farmer needed education in his trade; he needed effective organization; he needed the protection of the government from the monopolies and other current evils.

The tillers of the soil were portrayed as feeding and clothing the world, and had to support the government in times of peace and fight its battles in time of war. Yet in governmental offices and emoluments they were practically ignored. What attractions were there to hold the ambitious young men and women on the farm?⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *Progressive Farmer*, April 29, 1890; see Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, *passim*; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 410.

⁷⁸ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 28. For a full account of the names, mileage, valuation of all railroads in Alabama in 1892, see Berney, *Hand Book*, pp. 375-385; *Auditor's Report*, also *R. R. Com. Report*, 1892, also for each preceding year. In 1887, there were twenty-four railroads in the state with a total of 1819 miles, assessed at \$10,528,000. By 1892 there were forty-three roads, 3426 miles, assessed at \$37,356,000. The value was \$48,000,000.—Berney, pp. 357, 534; see *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, pp. 894, and 953.

⁷⁹ See for a good picture of the agrarian grievances, J. D. Hicks, "Farmers Alliance in N. C.", in *N. C. Hist. Rev.*, April, 1925.

⁸⁰ *Proceedings Fourth Session Agric. Soc.*, p. 28.

The important governmental positions were said to be held by members of the legal profession. Of the 492,000 persons engaged in occupations, 380,000 were engaged in some form of agricultural pursuits,⁸¹ yet the bulk of legislators were lawyers. For example, it was claimed that the state senate for the session of 1882-'83 had only three farmers out of a total of thirty-three, the lawyers usually outnumbering the farmers ten to one. According to the 1880 census, Alabama had 476 farmers to each lawyer, yet its senate had ten times as many lawyers as farmers, giving each lawyer the power or voice in legislation of 4,760 farmers. If the quarter million laborers be added to the farmers, the disparity between lawyer and ordinary producer would be greatly increased. Only by permanent organization could the farmer ever hope to cope with other classes which owed their superior influence to the power of organization.⁸³

To appreciate the relatively insignificant position of the farmer, it was only necessary to observe the railroad interests of the country; to contemplate their vast systems stretched as a network over the land until they encompassed the entire continent and, like a spider's web, held rigidly all that came within their confines.⁸⁴ Theirs was considered a paramount, dictatorial influence exercised over the people through all branches of the government. It was argued that the railroads and other corporations received millions of dollars in Alabama annually through exorbitant rates and discriminating practices.

The chief complaint against the railroads was due to high freight and passenger rates, injury to property, and absence of popular control.⁸⁵ However, investigation fails to reveal such an extremely antagonistic attitude toward railroads in Alabama as prevailed in many other sections.⁸⁶ This was probably due in part to the fact that Alabama had not been cursed by overbuilding of railroads. Most farmers were eager to see a railroad and to

⁸¹ *Tenth Census (Pop.)*, pp. 705, 712; *Proceedings Third Session Agric. Soc.*, p. 62.

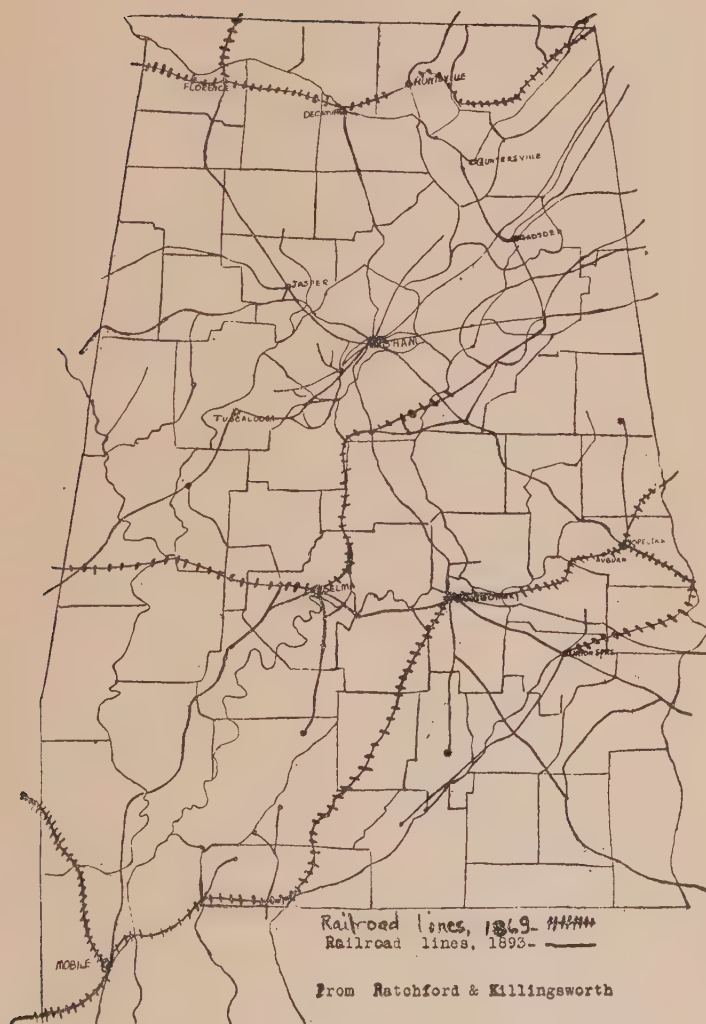
⁸² *Proc. Fourth Session, Agric. Soc.*, p. 63; *Tenth Census (Pop.)*, p. 732.

⁸³ Alabama had 798 lawyers in 1880.

⁸⁴ Kile, *Farm Bureau*; p. 18; Wells, *Industrial History*, p. 415; Buck, *Granger Movement*, p. 13.

⁸⁵ See Arnett, *Populist Movement*, pp. 68 ff.

⁸⁶ See *First Annual report of the R. R. Com.*, 1881, p. 33. The author's independent conclusion is confirmed by a subsequent letter (Sept. 4, 1924) from Captain A. T. Goodwyn, Jeffersonian



have one run by or near their home. This does not mean the total absence of complaint against this type of corporation, for such would be an incorrect assumption, but it does mean that in Alabama comparatively less criticism was hurled against the railroads than in the West where the Grangers fought fiercely and effectively against railroads and elevator monopolies.

A bitter fight was waged in "The Grange legislature" during the session of 1876-'77 over a bill to regulate freight rates, particularly as regards rates on long and short hauls.⁸⁷ The average man could not understand why the railroad should carry freight on beyond its destination and then back to its destination cheaper than to stop off there at first. He could see the necessity for higher local rates than on through traffic, but could not see how, for example, a shipment of goods for Evergreen could go from Mobile through Evergreen to Montgomery and then back to Evergreen cheaper than by a direct shipment to Evergreen from Mobile.⁸⁸ Do away with this "indirect method" and there would be no kick against the railroads. L. P. Walker, President of the Constitutional Convention of 1875, had stated that the growth of corporations was one of the marvels of the age. "Their power like that of King George III," said he, "has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished,"⁸⁹ for they represented individuals and were for selfish, personal ends.

Alabama had had her bitter experience with real and fake railroads during the early 'seventies, and the consequent tax burden imposed upon the people was sufficient to jog the memory of property owners for many dreary winters. The railroads of the country were blamed chiefly for the panic of 1873 which helped to set going the two decades of depression which followed. Bankruptcy and ruin were caused by these so-called haughty tyrants which had fattened on the people's generosity and patron-

(Populist) candidate for governor in 1896. He says: "The people were friendly to the railroads. Knowing their importance in the development of the country, they thought they were entitled to earn a reasonable dividend on their investment, and their employes, were entitled to receive generous salaries and wages. The railroads excited prejudice (however) by their efforts to evade just claims, and to postpone their payments. This condition has been lately remedied."

⁸⁷ *Advertiser*, Jan. 27, 1877; *House and Senate Journals*, 1876-77.

⁸⁸ *Annual Report of R. R. Com.*, 1884-5.

⁸⁹ *Advertiser*, Sept. 7, 1875; *Journal of the Convention*, 1875.

age.⁹⁰ After 1877 railroad strikes came with their increasing disasters, and many even in Alabama recognized that a pruning of power and a general cleansing were necessary and that the government should deal more radically than merely to adjust freight and passenger rates.⁹¹ By 1880 there was a cry over the state for the legislature to create a railroad commission. The movement was led by Colonel Daniel S. Troy, senator from Montgomery county, who wrote newspaper articles⁹² to instruct the people and the legislature on railroads. The press became enthusiastic for regulations. It was claimed that the earnings of the roads were large, due to their high rates, and that their control had passed largely to Wall Street.

Indeed some of the press were especially antagonistic toward the railroads and other corporations which were thought to be too powerful, too autocratic, overriding private rights. As one paper⁹³ put it, "If the members of the present general assembly fail to provide a remedy for these evils, then the people will find men who have the nerve and brain to inaugurate and execute the much needed reform."

By 1881, comparatively early among the Southern states, sufficient opposition to the railroad policy was aroused to force through the legislature a bill to create a State Railroad Commission, to be composed of three expert members, appointed by the governor with the senate's approval.⁹⁴ This commission was a product of

⁹⁰ *Advertiser*, July 25, 1877. See Fleming *Civil War*, pp. 587-605 for railroad mileage, values, etc. See also W. E. Martin, *Internal Improvements*, p. 70.

⁹¹ DuBose, Article No. 48, in *Age-Herald*, August 11, 1913.

⁹² *Iron Age*, Feb. 2, 1881.

⁹³ See *Acts*, 1881-2, p. 72; also *Acts*, 1886-7, p. 48. *Iron Age*, March 2, 1881; DuBose, Article No. 48; *Age-Herald*, Aug. 11, 1913; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 293; *Advertiser*, Feb. 3, 1881, Feb. 26, 1881, Feb. 22, 1881; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 275; Owen, *Alabama*, II, p. 1152. The bill passed the house by 59 to 20 and the senate 28 to 0. Gov. Cobb approved the act Feb. 26, 1881 and appointed these three commissioners: W. L. Bragg, Pres.; C. P. Ball, railroad man, and Jas. Crook, farmer, associate members. The salaries, respectively, were \$3,500 and \$3,000 with a clerk at \$1,500. The legislature is said to have profited especially by the Massachusetts and Georgia laws relating to commissions. (See *House and Senate Journals*, 1881.)

⁹⁴ *Acts*, p. 177, 178, 190; DuBose, Article, No. 69, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 10, 1913; *Advertiser* Nov. 25, 1886; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 275; See *Auditor's Reports* and *R. R. Com. Report* 1886 and each year. *Iron Age*, March 30, 1882; August 18, 1881. See *Annual Reports*

the State Grange's influence, and its powers were very complete. The work of the commission was very wholesome to the interests not only of the agricultural class but of all classes.

The railroads were due a debt of gratitude from the people for their part in building up the state, and they had their defenders. The *Auditor's Report* for 1879 showed the value of the twenty-three railroads in the state to be approximately \$15,000,000—by no means a poor showing considering what the state had passed through during the previous decade.⁹⁵ Dozens of acts for the incorporation of new roads were passed by the legislature during the 'eighties, especially the later years of the decade.⁹⁶

In spite of what the commission had done in the way of improved facilities, reduction of freight and passenger rates⁹⁷ (saving passengers alone over two-thirds of a million each year), the prevention of pools and discriminations, by 1889—a very active year of railroad building—no other question was so much discussed as was the railroad commission. Although Mr. Kolb was riding on free passes and in Pullman cars, he was at the same time complaining of high freight rates.⁹⁸ In February, 1889, he reported that as yet the Alliance had not been able to accomplish aught in the reduction of transportation charges.⁹⁹

In that year the railroads seem to have been attacked on all sides, by people and press. There were as many as fifteen¹⁰⁰ bills hostile to the railroads in the 1888-89

R. R. Com. for the period 1881-1897; Buck, *Granger Movement*, p. 181. For railroad bills before the legislature in 1884 see W. L. Bragg, speech before the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1884. Passenger rates were rather generally reduced from 5 or 6 cents a mile to 3 cents. (See, e. g., *4th Ann. Report R. R. Com.*, 1885, p. 11.) The Fourth Report stated that the commission's decisions and recommendations as to rates had not been disobeyed by a single road.

⁹⁵ *Advertiser*, Jan. 2, 1879; *Auditor's Report*, 1879.

⁹⁶ See *Acts*, 1888-9, pp. 268, 458, and *passim*; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 283.

⁹⁷ See *House and Senate Journals*, 1889-90; *Acts*, 1889-90, *passim*. He complained bitterly against the rates on shipping melons, saying the freight was too high, that the freight at a hundred dollars a car amounted to 10 cents a melon which was a good price for the melon itself.

⁹⁸ *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.* pp. 60-63.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁰ *Birmingham News*, Nov. 27, 1892; *Advertiser*, Dec. 13, 1888; *House and Senate Journals*, 1888-9, *passim*.

session, several of these providing for the abolition of the commission by the "Kid Legislature." It was urged that the commission was a political machine. While many papers urged drastic action, others cautioned conservatism, saying the state owed much to its carriers.¹⁰¹ The 1889 session adjourned after voting down all of the fifteen bills.¹⁰² But the fight continued. There was much talk of discrimination by the railroads to the detriment of the depressed farmer who was hurt by high tariffs whether he exported his own products or imported goods. The net result was that he received a much smaller price for the goods he sold, and paid an exorbitant price, due partly to transportation charges, for the goods he bought. The profit went, so it was contended, to soulless corporations.¹⁰³

Several bills for the repeal of the commission were introduced in 1892-3. Others intended to kill it by abolishing the salaries of the commissioners. One great complaint, in addition to the fact that the commission was virtually paid from railroad funds,¹⁰⁴ was against the governor's power of appointing the members. This gave him too much political leverage. His hands were tied, so it was said, by the powerful railroad companies. The farmers advocated popular election of the commission, but it was several years before such a law was enacted. As in 1889, it was charged that the commission was run solely in the interests of a few chosen spirits; that since its establishment no state convention or legislature had met which had not been "fixed" or "bossed" by the commissioners in the interests of their friends.¹⁰⁵ So evident was this influence that it was claimed that the bulk of the people would tolerate it no longer. These high salaried minions of oppressive trusts should be abolished.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ *Advertiser*, March, 1889; *Advertiser*, Jan. 1, 31, 1889; Feb. 7, 1889. One defect of the law establishing the commission was that its salary was to be paid from funds paid into the state treasury by the railroads. This was regarded as a stupendous farce.

¹⁰² *Birmingham News*, Nov. 21, 1892.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *House and Senate Journals*, 1892-3, *passim*; *Advertiser*, Feb. 7, 1889, Feb. 9 and July 19, 1893. See accompanying map for railroad lines in 1869 and 1893.

¹⁰⁵ *Birmingham News*, Nov. 21, 1892; *Ibid.*, August 8, 1892.

¹⁰⁶ *Birmingham News*, Nov. 27, 1892; *Advertiser*, April 3, 1887; See Owen, *Alabama*, Vols. III and IV under each commissioner's name. Mr. W. L. Bragg, president of the first commission had become a member of the newly created Interstate Commerce Com-

Looking only at their own side and feeling merely their own woes, the farmers attributed much of their distress to the railroads which, instead of being public servants, were grasping trusts and defiers of public opinion.¹⁰⁷ It was admitted that state legislation before 1887, and both state and national legislation after that date, gave considerable relief in attempts at railroad regulation. But high prices for transportation and for goods purchased, linked with ever lowering prices of farm commodities created a revolution which did not abate even after railroad rates were made more reasonable.¹⁰⁸

Although the Alabama railroad commission was created a decade before the rise of the Populists, as such, numerous charges continued to be hurled against the whole transportation system¹⁰⁹ on down into the 'nineties and indeed into the twentieth century. It is therefore clearly justifiable¹¹⁰ to include the railroads as one of the causes of Populism. The distant rumblings of discontent from the farmers against railroads,¹¹¹ banks, the currency system and all other corporate organizations, were soon to swell into distinctly audible voices expressed through political activity, for being unable to get the relief desired through non-political organizations, their next step was to woo politics as a panacea.

BANKS AND CURRENCY

Then again the farmer said it was only necessary to glance at the inequitable banking and currency systems of the country to see how he was discriminated against.¹¹² It was alleged that the system of national banks had swallowed up all other banking systems until it supplied nearly 100 per cent of the facilities and banking capital

mission in 1887, and other members after retiring had played prominent parts in Alabama politics.

¹⁰⁷ Wells, *Industrial History*, p. 411.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*; Schlesinger, *New Viewpoints*, p. 253.

¹⁰⁹ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. State Agric. Soc.*, p. 42.

¹¹⁰ S. A. Delap, *Populist Party in N. C.*, p. 48.

¹¹¹ Nixon, *Populist Movement in Iowa*, p. 9.—"Railway transportation was an important factor in both the development and the dissatisfaction of this period" (1880-'90). Confirmed also by personal letter from an Alabama ex-governor.

¹¹² *Proceedings, Fifth Ann. Sess. Agr. Soc.*, p. 61; Personal letter from Captain A. T. Goodwyn, Sept. 4, 1924. No attempt will be made to go into a detailed discussion of the intricate questions of money and banking, over which expert economists still differ but some general statements will be made to show how the farmer was affected.

of the entire country, and had even usurped the power of Congress to regulate the currency and to control its volume, not in the interest of the masses, but for their own weal and to the detriment of the farmer. Indeed the latter class was without practical access to any effective banking system.¹¹³ The ten per cent tax on state bank issues by the law of 1865 had driven many state banks out of existence giving the farmers another grudge against national banks. Nor could the farmer appreciate or understand the banking business. He knew it to be his enemy, making its profits directly or indirectly off the farming population. Under the prevailing distress, with high prices for manufactured goods and no sale or extremely low prices for the farmer's own products, and with little money in sight and that at highly appreciated rates the banking system was as a red flag before his eyes. He worked from sun to sun and that with little material, social or cultural profit. What was the nature of this heinous banking system whose operators,¹¹⁴ closeted in elegant quarters, could open their doors at 9 A.M. closing them at 3 P.M. and still make profits many times beyond those of the farmer?

There were only nine national banks in Alabama in 1880 and twenty-five in 1889, with a capital stock of \$1,508,000 and \$3,891,100, respectively. Their very scarcity and inadequate relief to the farmer intensified the complaint against them.¹¹⁵

Nor were railroads and banks the only forces hostile to the farmer's interests. Other corporate interests received their share of his goods produced by hard, long hours. Of an annual cotton crop averaging almost 800,000 bales at, say, \$40 a bale, or a total of \$32,000,000, the manufacturer due to the special protection accorded him by the tariff laws, received perhaps a million and a half upon the \$4,500,000 of farm implements in the state. The farmer felt that he had to pay a tax of some 75 per cent on all manufactured iron and farm utensils, 40 per cent on woolen goods, 33 per cent on cotton goods, and a high duty on many other things to eat and wear.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *Proceedings, Alabama Bankers Association*, 1890, p. 61; *Veazie Bank v. Fenno*, 8 Wall, 533.

¹¹⁴ For statistics on Alabama banks of 1890, see Berney, *Hard Book*, pp. 544-5.

¹¹⁵ Herbert, *Solid South*, pp. 423-4; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 618; *Blue Book*, 1922, p. 58.

¹¹⁶ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.* p. 29; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 616. Taussig, *History of the Tariff*, *passim*.

Then there was the ever present middleman, with a low estimate of 20 per cent profit, who received from the cotton grower an annual sum of six and a half million dollars. The middleman, who caused prices to be much higher to the consumer, was particularly odious to the farmer who could not appreciate the economics of the situation. To him the middleman, the man standing between producer and consumer, was not in any sense a producer, but an unnecessary parasite. The average farmer still entertained subconsciously the physiocratic view of economics.¹¹⁷ The functions of the distributor, a new factor in the chain, were little understood and the farmer failed to relish exorbitant prices which he must pay for his purchases, while at the same time he was either unable to find a market for the goods he had produced, or if such a market was found, the price was not sufficient to justify him in the sale and shipment of his productions, so great were freight charges.¹¹⁸ The farmer's income fell first and faster than that of the man he traded with. He could not force the price of cotton up, but the middleman could continue to exact the same warehouse and commission charges, hence the storm against him, and one of the first tasks of the organized farmers was to set up business for themselves to oust the middle profiteer.¹¹⁹

Nor did the farmer's complaints cease when he had vented his wrath upon the prevailing land, labor, tariff and transportation systems. These were burdensome enough, but more directly was he concerned with questions of finance. Finances were the goal. With adequate money, his other ills might be satiated. The average farmer thought all material conveniences and blessings obtainable if he only had the purchase money. The per capita mortgage debt in Alabama¹²⁰ in 1890 was \$26. With 5.37 persons to the family, this meant that the head of the family was taxed on \$140 as his mortgage indebtedness alone—a heavy burden considering the unprofitableness of agriculture. Too, with half the people black and owning no property, the white man's tax burden was doubled, a fact not true in the West or North. The

¹¹⁷ *Iron Age*, Sept. 23, 1875.

¹¹⁸ Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 21.

¹¹⁹ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess.*, p. 64; *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

¹²⁰ *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 913, 1016; *Advertiser*, Jan. 31, 1874.

negroes were untaxed because¹²¹ they possessed no property.

At no time between 1874 and 1896 was the farmer in a prosperous condition. His financial situation in 1874 was pictured as most deplorable.¹²² Although the Debt Commission had removed twenty millions of the debt by "compromise," there still remained a \$10,000,000 state debt which decreased with exceeding slowness, the state doing well to meet annual interest on its bonds.¹²³ In 1890 the state debt was still more than \$9,000,000. Moreover, each county, city and individual had obligations, and the farmer especially was verily weighed down by taxation.

It was the farmer's misfortune that as his property decreased in value his tax burden increased both relatively and absolutely. According to the *Progressive*¹²⁴ *Farmer* the total wealth in the U. S. in 1850 was \$7,135,780,228, six-sevenths of which was assessed for taxation. Eighty-four per cent of the total wealth was owned by farmers. But note the change by 1890 when the total wealth was \$64,000,000,000—nine times that of 1860—yet only three-eighths, or \$24,000,000,000, was assessed for taxation. Of this total wealth of \$64,000,000,000 the farmer's share was less than one-fourth (\$15,000,000,000) yet he bore 62 per cent of the country's total tax burden.¹²⁵

Furthermore, farm property values decreased with the increase of town population. The rapid rise of towns in the industrial area of the state after 1880 drew thousands of farm hands into towns where a new labor class was created. Town industries did not grow correspondingly with the growth of town population, hence they felt the pangs of hunger and the burdens of oppressive government. "To Let" signs were numerous and the county records were laden with liens and mortgages on both town and country property. Emigration westward be-

¹²¹ *Advertiser*, Feb. 2, 1874; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, 1016. The total number of mortgages in force in 1890 was 93,828, the average life being 2.76 years. (*Ibid.* pp. 1012, 1025).

¹²² *Advertiser*, Jan. 31, 1874.

¹²³ *Advertiser*, May 1, 1874; *Age-Herald*, July 30, 1890; *Auditor's Report*, 1890, p. 67.

¹²⁴ March 11, 1890; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 952, 961.

¹²⁵ Alabama's total assessed property in 1890 was valued at \$295,000,000, which netted an annual revenue of more than \$1,000,000. See *Age-Herald*, Oct. 8, 1890, *Auditor's Report*, 1890, p. 60; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 961.

came heavy, and expensive lawsuits were common on the part of landholders trying to collect interest and principal.¹²⁶

Under such conditions, with crude and unequal tax machinery, there was every tendency toward tax evasion, however the farmer, of all classes, succeeded less in this game than the members of other vocations. Legislative reforms were demanded for this growing evil because under existing conditions the conscientious and honest tax payer bore the real burden of taxation.¹²⁷ Many refused to give in property at fair values.¹²⁸

Money was not only scarce, but it came at greatly appreciated values. Everything financial seemed to be tied up in Wall Street. Capitalists and bankers of the East appeared to be in conspiracy with the railroads of the South and West¹²⁹ and the farmer of all classes was hurt most. This deplorable condition was attributed largely to "the terrible financial system of the government."¹³⁰ It was contended that currency had been contracted to a volume inadequate to the necessities of the people and trade, the result being high priced money and low priced articles.¹³¹

What money the farmers had was of the cheaper variety, small coins and Greenbacks. Before this time the farmer's plight had not been so disastrous, and it was now natural for him to howl against the 10 per cent tax on state bank notes and the "crime of '73." Knowing

¹²⁶ DuBose, Article No. 55, in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 4, 1913.

¹²⁷ *Iron Age*, Feb. 2, 1881.

¹²⁸ *Advertiser*, Sept. 27, 1874; DuBose, Article No. 24 in *Age-Herald*, May 3, 1913; *Advertiser*, Jan. 7, 1890. To illustrate: In Autauga county, in 1874, the total value of fire arms listed with the tax assessor was \$24 (a small amount so soon after the war!). Only four farm mules were returned by Conecuh county assessment list; 37 cattle in Cleburne county; 429 horses in Montgomery county; and not a single musical instrument was listed from thirteen counties. Quite an interesting contrast was shown by the "returns" from two other counties (Marion and Winston) in 1890, where "shooting arms" were assessed at \$6,222 and farm implements at \$93 for the two counties. Winston county assessed its "tools" at \$5. A partial explanation of this status of affairs was due to the exemption law—farm tools being exempt while fire arms were taxable.

¹²⁹ Wells *Indus. Hist.* p. 411; F. E. Haynes, *Third Party Movements Since the Civil War*, p. 84.

¹³⁰ *Cheap-Money Experiments*, p. 70; *Progressive Farmer*, June 10, 1890.

¹³¹ *Progressive Farmer*, April 29, 1890; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 413.

little of the real intricacies of public finance the average farmer demanded a cheap money, more money, a larger circulation, and to him even paper money looked good.¹³² He wanted the same money for the rich as for the poor and joined the silver enthusiasts of the West in demanding remonetization of silver and more paper money. Too, he believed thoroughly in the "per capita" delusion,¹³³ thinking that \$50 per capita had an absolute two and one half times the purchase power of \$20 per capita. He believed that prosperity was determined by the per capita of money in circulation, whatever its character. He was unaware that there had been a steady per capita¹³⁴ "rise from \$17.50 in 1870 to \$23.15 in 1891." Judging by the per capita theory, 1890-91 should have been a far more prosperous year than 1870, whereas the reverse was quite true.

This cheap money philosophy led the Farmers' Alliance to formulate an elaborate financial program including free and unlimited coinage of silver, and a subtreasury system for increasing the volume and flexibility of currency,¹³⁵ characterized by its enemies as more dangerous than John Law's "Scheme." There is no doubt as to the genuine distress among the farming class. Many diverse causes for their plight have been cited, but one of the most plausible reasons is that it was due partially to relative overproduction. During the twenty years of continued depression, 1870-'90—years of agrarian fermentation—some improvement, though apparently slow to arrive in Alabama, was made in the means of production.¹³⁶ Changes in machinery due to invention, greater uses of fertilizers, and a general cheapening of the process of transportation tended to flush the farmer with products for which he could find no market. Increased production in the West, due to new lands and new machinery, worked a hardship upon the farmer of

¹³² W. A. Pfeffer, "The Passing of the People's Party," in *North American Review*, Vol. 166, p. 17, Jan. 1898.

¹³³ *Cheap-Money Experiments*, p. 68.

¹³⁴ *Cheap-Money Experiments*, pp. 32, 70; See *U. S. Statistical Abstract*, 1903, *Frontis*; A. M. Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 87-88.

¹³⁵ *Cheap-Money Experiments*, p. 98; Taussig *The Silver Situation in the United States*, p. 97; Delap, *The Populist Party in North Carolina*, p. 49.

¹³⁶ C. S. Sargent, in *Garden and Farm*, IX, pp. 391-392, Sept. 30, 1896, attributes the agricultural depression to overproduction due to the *Homestead Act* and improved machinery and technique.

Alabama who could not increase his power of production in proportion to that of the Western farmer, yet the market was glutted for the Alabama farmer as truly as for the Western farmer whose production was greatly increased.¹³⁷ Moreover, the actual appreciation of gold, due to the world tendency toward a gold standard,¹³⁸ worked a hardship upon the farmer.

¹³⁷ Taussig, *The Silver Situation*, pp. 101-117.

¹³⁸ Taussig, *The Silver Situation*, pp. 116, 117. The truth of this may be illustrated: A farmer who had contracted a hundred dollar debt years before when prices were high in terms of inflated paper, could have repaid the hundred dollars with a hundred bushels of corn or one bale of cotton. But under different conditions, when prices of corn and cotton had been divided by two, the farmer would now have to give twice the commodities formerly required, namely two hundred bushels of corn or two bales of cotton.

CHAPTER III

ANTECEDENTS OF POPULISM (CONTINUED) :

FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

THE GRANGE

Following the war and reconstruction labor and farm life were badly deranged. Agriculture had been practically destroyed and sufficient time had not elapsed for adjustment to new conditions. More than twenty thousand able bodied men—one fourth the state's contribution to the Confederate cause—had failed to return from the battlefield.¹ Besides, thousands who did return were so old, maimed, and physically unfit as to be very inefficient laborers. These were white men,—men who had either done work themselves or seen that the slaves did the work. The sudden loss of the negro as a source of labor due to the Thirteenth Amendment has been estimated at some 435,000 negroes at \$500 per head, or more than one-fifth billion dollars besides one third billion loss in other property, making a half billion² as a total. The negroes now being free, and greatly confused and altered in spirit as a result of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, it was difficult for them to realize that they must still work, even though it be under a different system from that of yore. They were now being exposed to their initial experience in governmental affairs; politics rather than agriculture was the magnetic force, even though the colored man was merely a bow to the fiddle.³ He furnished the votes but reaped little benefit politically. Now with industrial organization more common and more powerful than ever before, with all forms of business undergoing re-organization, and with the common laborer apparently powerless as an individual to compete for his share of the world's goods against corporate organizations, the laboring man in the various fields of endeavor

¹ DuBose, Article No. 71, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 14, 1913; Wells, *Indus. History*, p. 409; Herbert, *Solid South*, p. 63.

² Miller, *Alabama*, p. 235.

³ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

⁴ Dubose, Article No. 72, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 18, 1913.

began likewise to organize or unionize. Nor was agriculture to be left out. Traditionally farmers are slow to organize, and when once organized, are exceedingly difficult to hold under rigid organization, yet they now realized that their interests would allow them no longer to refrain from some kind of collective action⁵ and the subconscious sympathy of the farmers for the other classes of laborers, then organizing for self-protection, became very strong, so strong that the feeling found active political expression, and in Alabama proved later a wedge to disrupt the white man's party by dividing it equally between two factions contesting at the ballot for control of the government of the commonwealth.⁶

During the two decades following the Civil War numerous farmers' organizations were effected with a view to bettering their conditions, either by legislation or by improved productive marketing facilities. A general spirit of unrest was manifest. The farmers' movement and political revolution in Alabama had a rather close connection with the "National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry," an order at first purely non-political, but largely educational and social, and especially for farmers and their wives and daughters.⁷

The Grange was first organized, December 4, 1867, after an inspection tour through several southern states, Alabama included, by O. H. Kelley, a clerk in the Post Office Department, Washington, D. C. "The advancement of agriculture" was declared to be the purpose of this organization⁹ which grew slowly during the first year, but when it was suggested that the Grange offered opportunities for protection against corporations and also "opportunities for coöperative buying and selling" it took on added zeal and by the end of the year 1873, all but four states had local Granges, there being over 20,000 Granges with three-fourths of a million members in the United States.¹⁰ "The Agrarian Crusade" was thus well under way.¹¹ The general purpose of the Grange, namely,—

⁵ *Age-Herald*, Sept. 5, 1913; see S. J. Buck, *Granger Movement*, p. 307 and Chap. I.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Advertiser*, Feb. 19, 1874. Lippincott, *Econ. Development of U. S.* p. 373; see Arnett, *Populist Movement*, pp. 36, ff.

⁸ Kile, *The Farm Bureau Movement*, p. 10; DuBose, Articles Nos. 56, 72, 74 in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 5, 1913; Oct. 18, and 21, 1913; Wells, *Indus. History*, p. 414; S. J. Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 3.

⁹ Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 10; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 14.

"to labor for the good of the Order, our Country, and Mankind,"—would evidently embrace "efforts to enhance the comforts and attractions of homes, to maintain the laws, to advance agricultural and industrial education, to diversify crops, to systematize farm work, to establish coöperative buying and selling, to suppress personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices,¹² and to discountenance the credit system, the fashion system, and every other system tending to prodigality and bankruptcy." The Grange claimed¹³ to be not an enemy of capital but hostile to "the tyranny of monopolies"; not an enemy of railroads, necessary to the country's welfare, but opposed to their exorbitant freight rates and monopolistic power. It was to be non-political or non-partisan as an organization, yet its members as individuals were to perform their full political duties as citizens.¹⁴ The Grange in Alabama, as elsewhere, became an enthusiastic, popular organization, locals springing up spontaneously, notwithstanding its inability to please some who opposed it for various reasons, as its secretness or its non-partisan character, or perhaps its too wide participation in politics.¹⁵ For some it was too conservative; for others too radical. But to say the least, its purposes were wholesome—for the benefit and welfare of the farming class. They were urged to produce more and to buy less; to enter into less litigation and more arbitration;¹⁶ to grow less cotton and more crop diversification; to discontinue the prevailing ruinous credit system based upon crop mortgages; to abolish the lien system; to improve their farms, build better homes, live better, fuller, happier lives and make possible a better civilization. These were, in general, the monumental tenets of the order.¹⁷

The first official Grange in Alabama was established¹⁸

¹¹ *Ibid.* 17; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 10; Adv. Feb. 17, 1874. For National Grange Constitution, see *Advertiser*, May 2, 1874.

¹² For "The Grangers' Ten Commandments," see *Advertiser*, July 15, 1874.

¹³ Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 15; C. A. Beard, *Contemporary American History*, pp. 147 ff; Muzzey, *The United States of America*, II, pp. 89-92.

¹⁴ DuBose, Article No. 74, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 21, 1913.

¹⁵ DuBose Article No. 72, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 18, 1913; Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 16.

¹⁶ Wells, *Indus. Hist.*, p. 414; Buck, *Granger Movement*, p. 302; Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 16.

¹⁷ DuBose, Article No. 72, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 18, 1913; Wells, *Indus. Hist.*, p. 414. Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 666; *Advertiser*, Jan. 20, 1874 and Feb. 24, 1874.

at Yorkville, July 15, 1872. Granges immediately sprang up in all parts of the state under the supervision of the professional organizers from the national headquarters of the Grange. A state Grange was formed in Montgomery, November 27, 1873, in which all the local Granges were gathered under one head. W. H. Chambers of Russell county was Worthy Master and General E. M. Law of Lee, Secretary, with George D. Johnston, state lecturer.¹⁹ The maximum number of Granges reached 650 in 1875 with a state membership of 17,440. The Grange played a big part in the election of 1874.

DuBose says²⁰ that "while the mind and heart of the people were devoted to their political redemption, they were not neglectful of the preparations for an improved and enlarged sphere of life." The educational and social features of the order were most prominent in its earlier days. Rallies, reunions, picnics, barbecues and public speaking were held in the open air, especially in the summer time, or at the 'Granges' or 'halls'—still extant in some parts of the state. In places there were Grange schools, as at Trinity, Morgan county, and Mt. Willing, Lowndes county. The Grange encouraged the spread of information by reading newspapers, by its public meetings, and especially through the county and state fairs, the latter being held annually at Montgomery or elsewhere, under the auspices of the State Grange, until taken over after the middle 'eighties by the State Agricultural Society.²¹

Immediately following the war, while cotton prices were good, farmers devoted practically all their energies to the growing of cotton, a money crop, to the neglect of raising meat and grains. The result was that corn, flour, hay, oats and meat must be shipped into the state from elsewhere, and at high prices, owing to exorbitant freight rates. After the panic of 1873, conditions were bad. There was an overproduction of cotton, due to the concentration on this one crop, despite the fact that labor conditions were deranged. The price of cotton tumbled from 50 to 30 to 10 cents a pound and farmers

¹⁸ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 263; *Advertiser*, Feb. 24, 1774, Jan. 20, 1774; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 349; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 666.

¹⁹ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 667, Buck, *Granger Movement*, pp. 56-59.

²⁰ DuBose, Article No. 5, in *Age-Herald*, Feb. 5, 1913.

²¹ DuBose, Article No. 56 in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 5, 1913; Buck, *Granger Movement*, pp. 279-301; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 667.

were unable to purchase absolute necessities.²² It was one of the purposes of the Grange to counsel the people to grow less cotton and more of other products. It was better to risk selling corn at 50 cents a bushel²³ than to grow cotton. "Corn and Hogs, or No Credit," was the way one Granger put it,²⁴ his idea being that cotton was ruinous to the South. He proposed that all merchants and factors establish a universal rule for the year 1878 that no credit would be given to any cotton raiser who had not a sufficient stock of corn and bacon to supply all the wants of his farm. Through the 'seventies, 'eighties and into the 'nineties Alabama depended too much upon Kansas for her bread and Iowa for her meat.²⁵ Only the thriftiest farmer realized, fully enough to make the realization effective, that it was poor economy to pay a high price and a high freight rate on hay shipped from the West to feed his mule in order to destroy hay in the field. The amount of hay produced was negligible.²⁶

In an address before the State Agricultural Society in Montgomery, February, 1889, Mr. H. Hawkins, Master of the State Grange, pleaded for the raising of more corn in Alabama where a hundred million bushels could be grown saying that Alabama between 1859 and 1879 had dropped off many million bushels in corn production and that corn was "both meat and bread to the cotton planter." In his opinion agriculture was languishing because the farmers were not self-sustaining.²⁷ The hundreds of thousands of dollars sent out of the state annually for corn, flour and meat, if retained in the state, would have relieved the financial exigencies.²⁸ Poverty and extensive cotton production were synonymous terms, or at least bore the relation of cause and effect. Grain, meat and milk were products necessary for home consumption, while cotton was regarded as necessary only for the

²² DuBose, Article No. 56 in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 5, 1913; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 667.

²³ *Advertiser*, March 24, 1774.

²⁴ *Advertiser*, July 20, 1777.

²⁵ *Advertiser*, Jan. 4, 1890.

²⁶ *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 616.

²⁷ *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 84.

²⁸ *Advertiser*, March 24, 1874. As one prominent Granger expressed it, "Let me urge the farmers to plant largely of corn. If 'cotton is king', corn is assuredly his prime minister, and as history shows plainly that the real power of the dead kingdoms of the past was wielded by the prime ministers in most instances, so it will prove in this."

purchase of luxuries.²⁹ In this respect the West which consumed half its corn was far more favorably circumstanced than the South which did not use directly as much as five per cent of its cotton. Let the people be economical in dress, urged local Grangers, let men wear home-made clothes, all food and garments being made at home, leaving out cotton if anything must be left out.³⁰

Never before had Alabama been so aroused by an agricultural organization.³¹ Nor was it merely a talking machine. It organized as a business enterprise to fight monopolies and to oust the odious middleman.³² County councils of the Granges as well as local chapters launched upon coöperative buying and selling, the county agent usually receiving a small commission on all transactions. This was a direct means of fighting monopolies which controlled prices to the detriment of the farmers. The county councils appointed committees to study banks and banking with a view to establishing such institutions under the operation of the Grange.³³ Grange stores were set up whereby the local units and the county units pooled in the purchase of supplies, as farm machinery from the manufacturer at wholesale prices, or other supplies from wholesale dealers, boycotting and driving out of business those dealers or manufacturers who would not meet the demands of the Grange in its efforts at securing lower priced purchases for the farmer, or higher prices for agricultural products to be sold.³⁴ Typical of these Grange stores was that of "The Jefferson County Coöperative Association" which, with a long set of rules, proclaimed the object of the association³⁵ to be the establishment and

²⁹ *Advertiser*, March 31, 1874.

³⁰ *Iron Age*, May 20, 1875; E. C. Betts, *Address*, Aug. 18, 1886, p. 16. Another phase of work, philanthropic in nature, carried on by the National Grange, was that of aiding indigent members of local units. In August, 1874 the Capital City Grange of Montgomery let it be known that some of its members were destitute and within a short time fully 10,000 pounds of free meat was shipped from Dubuque, Iowa by order of the National Grange to A. F. Ellsberry, purchasing agent for the State Grange. (*Advertiser*, Feb. 18, 1874.)

³¹ *Advertiser*, Aug. 21, 1874; Jan. 18, 1874; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 75.

³² Betts, *Address*, Aug. 18, 1886.

³³ *Advertiser*, Feb. 18, 1874; Buck, *Granger Movement*, pp. 238-278.

³⁴ Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 22; *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889; Buck *Granger Movement*, pp. 238 ff.

³⁵ *Advertiser*, Jan. 4, 1890; *Advertiser*, July 23, 1891.

maintenance of general trade in merchandise, farm products and machinery, for the mutual benefit of the shareholders and customers. No member could own more than 100 shares of capital in the association. It established a system of firms over the state to act as "its agents under bond"; established the Grangers Life and Health Insurance Co. of the U. S. in Mobile in 1875 by private enterprise, the State Grange to receive 25 per cent of the first premium.³⁶ In Alabama, during the Grange era (1872 to 1896) money was saved each year by coöperative buying and selling.³⁷ Grange manufacturies on a small scale were set up in some places³⁸ and Grange warehouses were common from the State Grange warehouse down to those of the local unit.³⁹

After 1875, the Grange in most states declined in vigor and numbers. The high tide of the Grange had also passed in Alabama before 1880, however it revived considerably during the late 'eighties and continued as an organization⁴⁰ until 1896.

With discontent among farmers, it was inevitable that the Grange, or any other farmers' organization, would drift into politics. At most there is only a thin veil between the economical and the political aspect of many vital questions and in such cases they invariably mix. The time and conditions were ripe for such transition and for a few brief years the Grange was quite influential in the Alabama legislature as well as elsewhere.⁴¹

Summing up the Grange in Alabama, it may be said that it was well organized, including both men and wom-

³⁶ *Iron Age*, Feb. 3, 1876; *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 667.

³⁷ *Advertiser*, Jan. 4, 1890; Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 22.

³⁸ Mike Harvey, personal conference, Dec. 3, 1921; see also Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 85.

³⁹ *Advertiser*, March 20, 1874; *Advertiser*, Sept. 30, 1891; DuBose, Article No. 56, in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 5, 1913; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 667. The Grange had as its members many of the most prominent and respectable citizens of the several counties. To cite only two or three concrete instances: Isaac W. McAdory, life long educator of note, was in 1874 Master of the Jefferson County Grangers; and Hiram Hawkins prominent citizen of Barbour county was, after the resignation of W. H. Chambers, for twenty years Worthy Master of the State Grange.

⁴⁰ *Advertiser*, Jan. 6, 1877; Kile, *Farm Bureau*, p. 23; Wells, *Indus. Hist.*, p. 415; *Age-Herald*, March 13, 1889; *Advertiser*, Dec. 24, 1885; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 60; Buck, *Granger Movement*, pp. 58 ff; *Dothan Recorder*, July 16, 1896.

⁴¹ Wells, *Indus. Hist.*, p. 415; Buck, *Granger Movement*, Chap. III.

en. As an agricultural, educational and social organization it was undoubtedly of great benefit and comfort to the isolated rural classes.⁴² By the issuing of pamphlets inviting immigrants, by speeches and letters in the state press as well as in the Grange's own press organ, the *Southern Plantation*, with Colonel W. H. Chambers, an experienced newspaper man, as editor,⁴³ the public became more enlightened on general topics. A better system of farming was inculcated and by means of successful county and state fairs much interest was aroused in diversified crops. Those members who followed its counsel "to use brain as well as brawn upon the farm" became more highly successful as farmers. Mr. Hawkins attributed the agricultural boom in the prosperous wire grass section of southeast Alabama to the activities of the Grange.⁴⁵ The Grange essayed to reduce the commissions on cotton, the charges for storage and insurance, the rates on railroads, and the prices of bagging and fertilizers. Thus as a business enterprise considerable good was achieved, for every dollar saved by a small farmer meant much in days of distress.⁴⁶ But few, however, could contend that the Grange, or any other coöperative effort on the part of the farmers was a very efficient business agent. It lacked experience in such matters, and enthusiasm is not always a valid substitute for business sagacity and experience.⁴⁷ Even the organized farmers were not expert at politics. They were inexperienced and often radical. They accomplished less legislation directly than indirectly, however on the whole their influence on legislation was wholesome and not inconsiderable. Nor was their influence wholly class legislation. Among the laws which the Alabama Grange played an active part in securing were trespass laws, laws against the burning of woodlands, and laws making theft a fel-

⁴² Miller, *Alabama*, p. 263; Buck, *op. cit.*, pp. 302 ff.

⁴³ *Advertiser*, March 15, 1877; See *Address* of Hiram Hawkins, Master of State Grange, at Dothan, July 15, 1896, in *Grange Bulletin* and *Scientific Farmer* (Cincinnati, August 31, 1896.) He tells what the Grange did. On "Achievements of the Grange in the South", see article by H. Hawkins in *Labor and Capital*, pp. 447-493, May, 1891.

⁴⁴ *Iron Age*, June 1, 1876; *Iron Age*, Sept. 23, 1875; *Advertiser*, June 8, 1876, July 4, 1889; Oct. 26, 1877; Oct. 1, 1879; Nov. 16, 1879.

⁴⁵ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 263; *Iron Age*, Oct. 28, 1875.

⁴⁶ Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 85; *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

⁴⁷ Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 62; DuBose, No. 56 in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 5, 1913.

ony, the establishment of the Alabama Railroad Commission in 1881, the State Department of Agriculture in 1883, the State Agricultural Society in 1884,—to say nothing of its beneficent influence on the state's educational institutions and laws.⁴⁸ The constitution of 1875 was shaped partly by the influence of the Grange, especially the provision against free passes to public officials riding trains. The order, like its successor the Alliance, worked persistently for immigration and for reforms in the state convict lease system.⁴⁹ One of the important achievements due largely to the efforts of the State Grange was the enactment of a law in the early 'nineties providing for the election of the state commissioner of agriculture rather than appointment by the governor.⁵⁰ The Grange was the forerunner as well as the contemporary of the Alliance. Indeed after the latter came into the state in 1887 the two orders worked⁵¹ in very much the same manner, the Alliance becoming from its early days more political and partisan than the Grange. Many farmers belonged to both orders. The Grange, State Agricultural Society and the Alliance were good schools leading into the Populist movement.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Notwithstanding the many complaints from the agricultural element, the administrations of Governor O'Neal (1882-'86) and Seay (1886-'90) manifested a friendly attitude toward the farmers and many legislative efforts were made to relieve their distress. Indeed, Seay's administration has been called "the period of the farmers' movement"⁵² and with almost equal justification might the same title apply to the preceding four years under Governor O'Neal.

It was very necessary in an overwhelmingly rural state to look to the requirements of agriculture. An effort at such purpose had been made by the constitution of 1868 which contained a provision for the election for four years—twice the period of the other state officers—of a

⁴⁸ Buck, *Granger Movement*, p. 202; DuBose, Article No. 56 in *Age-Herald*, Sept. 5, 1913; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 667; Buck, *Granger Movement*, Chaps. IV and V.

⁴⁹ *Advertiser*, Feb. 15, 1874.

⁵⁰ *Age-Herald*, Aug. 6, 1890.

⁵¹ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 567.

⁵² J. W. DuBose, "The Period of the Farmers' Movement," in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 14, 1913.

commissioner as the head of a Department of Industrial Resources.⁵³ Observe that this department was provided not by a mere law but by the constitution itself. The purpose of the "bureau" was to develop agriculture and other industries of the state by collecting and disseminating information and statistics on Alabama's resources. A fine contemplation, but amid the turmoil of the period, little was accomplished and the constitution of 1875 abolished the "department."⁵⁴

For the next seven years Alabama had no such office, but February 23, 1883, the legislature passed the Hawkins bill creating a State Department of Agriculture whose functions were practically analagous to those of the Department of Industrial Resources.⁵⁵

Alabama was following Georgia's example in establishing such bureaus. Indeed the State Department of Agriculture like the Railroad Commission owed its existence to the Grange's influence.⁵⁶ The headquarters of the commissioner were to be at Auburn. However, the code of 1886 provided for its removal to the state capitol, where it has since remained.⁵⁷ Judge E. C. Betts of Huntsville was appointed by Governor O'Neal as the first commissioner, being reappointed in 1885.

In addition to the duties of analyzing soils and fertilizers,⁵⁸ and the protection of the farmer against spurious

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ See *Reports of Com'r. of Indus. Resources*, 1869-1874.

⁵⁵ *Age-Herald*, Sept. 7, 1913; *Acts*, 1882-3, pp. 190-197; Owen, *Alabama*, I, pp. 9-11; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284.

⁵⁶ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

⁵⁷ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. State Agric. Soc.* p. 16; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284; DuBose, Article No. 74, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 21, 1913.

⁵⁸ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, 17; see Section 13 of the Act of 1882-3; Owen, *Alabama*, I, pp. 9-11. Up to this time each farmer had had to be his own judge as to the kind of fertilizer he used. Moreover, since commercial fertilizers were now more commonly used than in earlier days when lands were more fertile and commercial fertilizers less plentiful, the individual farmer, unlearned in chemistry and the agricultural sciences, was more completely than ever at the mercy of the fertilizer manufacturer or middleman who wished a high profit. To protect the farmer in such transactions was one of the purposes of this new department set up by the government. It was a splendid safeguard provided by the government for the individual who would avail himself of its services. Men who continued to complain of no valuable returns from fertilizers were somewhat enlightened when it was revealed that \$4.42 was the real commercial value per ton of the fertilizer for which they regularly paid \$40. The department of agriculture greatly curtailed this class

fertilizer sales, this new department was also to serve as an investigation bureau.⁵⁹ It was charged with the preparation of an Agricultural Handbook to set forth in an official form the state's natural and social attractions and resources. Commissioner Betts prepared his first handbook in 1884 which supply was quickly exhausted. In the spring of 1887 a second handbook was issued, but before any copies were distributed, they were all destroyed by the burning of the main building of the College at Auburn.⁶⁰

The commissioner's office was said to receive some two hundred letters daily and 36,000 to 50,000 farmers were furnished regularly circulars, bulletins, and reports relating to crops and agricultural work in the state, some being prepared by the department and others directly by the experiment stations. These, with the numerous other points of contact between the department and the people offered some means of beautifying and enlightening the home on the farm, which Commissioner Kolb (1887) pictured as the "most God-forsaken place on earth." In this way more boys and girls were enticed to remain on the farm.⁶¹

There were many evidences of a growing interest in the so-called farmers' side of life, and such enthusiasm found legal expression in various ways. Aside from the establishment of the agricultural department in 1883 as a practical agricultural college for the masses, the Canebrake Agricultural Experiment Station was established in 1885 near Uniontown. This made the second experiment station, the other being at Auburn. Professor Newman⁶² attributed the necessity of two stations to the difference in character of the soil,—that in Lee county being sandy while the Perry county land was 'black cane

of imposition and fraud, and the price of fertilizer was divided by two. Yet thousands of dollars annually had gone from the state for the purchase of such spurious fertilizers. (*Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, pp. 35, 62, 73; *Ibid. Third Ann. Sess.*, p. 35.) The minimum amount of fertilizer used in 1888 was 65,000 tons, or 1,000 tons to the county. The cost in 1870 was \$1,300,000 and in 1880, \$2,422,000. (*Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 73; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 560; *Eleventh Census*, Pt. III, p. 616.

⁵⁹ *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 68.

⁶⁰ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 17.

⁶¹ *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, pp. 66, 78.

⁶² *Proceedings Fifth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 66; DuBose, Article No. 74, in *Age-Herald*, Oct. 21, 1913; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 199; *Proceedings Third Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 46.

brake land'. He urged the establishment of another station in the fertile limestone region of the Tennessee valley so that that type of soil might be better analyzed.⁶³ Some years later the legislature acceded to this demand, but the appropriation bill was vetoed by Governor Jones.⁶⁴ The popularity of the Department of Agriculture was evidenced by the fact that there were eleven aspirants to the commissionership⁶⁵ in 1887, following the resignation and death of Judge Betts.

⁶³ See *Experiment Station Reports*, 1887-96 for types of work.

⁶⁴ *Acts*, 1888-9, p. 1036.

⁶⁵ *Advertiser*, June 12, 1887. At this point it may be of interest to quote a humorous letter to Governor Seay written by "Corporal Needy" who out of his generous sympathy for the governor offered to relieve him from the embarrassing task of selecting a commissioner from the large number of aspirants.

"My Dear Governor:

"Just now you have my sympathy, and this I send to you as a relief. Soon you will be forced to appoint a Commissioner of Agriculture for the great state of Alabama, not the Alabama of here we rest, but the Alabama of here we boom. After saying we are well and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same blessing, I will come to the point. I want the office of Commissioner of Agriculture. First, I want it for the salary. Second, My wife wants to be Mrs. Commissioner of Agriculture. Third, My friends, I reckon, want me to have it. Fourth, I do love a good coal fire in winter. Fifth, I am fond of a good airy room with arm chair attachments for summer. Sixth, I would like to have two men to wait on me. Seventh, I want to advance the interest of our great commonwealth, not forgetting especially the interest of number one.

"Now, Governor, the number seven is a popular Biblical number, but if those given are not sufficient, I can give seventy times seven why I want the place. As to my qualifications, I can milk, churn, doctor horses and cattle, and most any disease chickens and hogs are subject to, except cholera, and in fine I am what might be termed a veterinary surgeon of the first water. I know how to stop goats from jumping, and mules from throwing down the fence. I can read Latin, spell in Noah Webster's speller and define in Daniel Webster's dictionary. I am pretty well up on public documents, having noted with care the drawings showing the whereabouts of the diseased cattle and swine are subject to; have read reports of the Ku Klux Committee, and when it comes to Tenth Census Reports I am heeled. Have read 'Thompson's Seasons', Come Gentle Spring, Ethereal Mildness, Come, studied Blair's Rhetoric and First Reader. In fact, I am tolerable well educated. I know that many applicants for the place are clever men, men of parts, and fit to fill any place in your power to bestow, from Notary of Public up to Commissioner of Agriculture; but to fill the latter place it takes a man of affairs like myself.

"My appointment would bring with it some changes that would be beneficial and would be appreciated. I would get after all the guano agents and have them tag all the sacks. Sure as you ever was Tom Seay I would do this thing. I would have good,

The Corporal's letter to "Private Tom" might have won first prize in a literary contest, but it failed to win the commissionership. The plum fell to the ambitions "Captain" R. F. Kolb of Eufaula, Barbour county, grandson and namesake of the well known "General" Reuben C. Shorter of Eufaula.⁶⁶ After graduating from the University of North Carolina, young Kolb settled on a large plantation with negroes to do the work. He was the youngest delegate to the famous State Democratic Convention at Montgomery in 1860; saw four years of service as a captain in the Confederate army and surrendered himself and his men in 1865 in N. C. according to the terms made between Generals Sherman and Johnston. For a decade after the war he was a big cotton planter, till cotton reached a low ebb in 1873, then he turned to raising watermelons, at which he became a champion. He had 150 acres in melons for commercial purposes and developed the "Kolb Gem" ("K. G."), known the South over, and advertised in all seed catalogues as America's most famous melon. He cut 200,000 melons in 1888 for seed, and shipped seed by the carload and sold 2,000 pounds of the famous "K. G." seed to one house.⁶⁷

clever clerks and make them know their place and keep them in it. I would issue monthly Bulletins, and even weekly Bulletins, if the growth of Lespedeza (Jasper Clover) demands it, would always say crab grass instead of Panicus Sanguinalis and Bermuda grass, instead of Cynodon Doctylon, and old father broom-sedge would never be proceeded before my Bulletin readers as Andropogon Virginicus. No, Governor, I would print my Bulletin in plain English. As to my age, I am not young enough to take the big head and not old enough to be childish, am just about the right age, and could fill the chair of Commissioner of Agriculture with ease and comfort to myself, and would do credit to the position thereby reflecting honor upon your good judgment in making the appointment.

"In giving me the appointment, Governor, you will run no risk whatever as I have a talent for that kind of business and if that talent lies dormant the sin will 'lie at your door'. Yours forever,
Corporal Needy."

⁶⁶ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 15; *Age-Herald*, Oct. 21, 1913.

⁶⁷ *Advertiser*, March 24, 1889. It will soon be observed how this new commissioner by his ambition, his extensive travels in every county in the state, holding clubs according to law, and by his genial and affable nature became very popular with the masses. As a member and defender of the Farmers' Alliance, it was natural for its members to rally to his cause and his political standard in later years. Little did it appear to the public that the statute providing the agricultural department with its elaborate machinery and duties was virtually creating a political agent which in less than ten years was to rend the Democratic party.

Commissioner Kolb made two trips into the northwest in 1888 trying to induce immigrants into Alabama.⁶⁸ On his second trip lasting two months during the late summer of 1888, he carried an exhibit of the state's natural resources and manufactures. This was the famous sixty-day trip of the "Alabama on Wheels," consisting of a railroad car loaded with Alabama products, accompanied, in an attached sleeping car, by Commissioner Kolb and fourteen other prominent Alabamians from different sections of the state. The cars were furnished and moved free of charge by the L. & N. R. R. through the states of Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio. Expenses totaling over \$30,000, including the cost of 30,000,000 pages of literature distributed, were borne by the people of the sections of the state which sent these "Alabama missionaries." "Alabama on Wheels" was inspected by more than a quarter million people who passed through the cars.⁶⁹

The commissioner claimed to have accomplished great good for the state by this unique advertisement of its resources. Within a few months following the tour, he claimed to have a record of more than a thousand desirable new citizens who had come to the state and invested a million dollars as a result of the trip. Strongly did he urge the legislature to do something really worth while to appeal to immigrants.⁷⁰

THE STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

The manifold objects of the State Department of Agriculture could be better attained by an organization widespread among its beneficiaries, bringing them closer together and assisting them to adopt and utilize more perfectly the information which the department would

If such was contemplated, it was an ingenious trick.—*Atlanta Constitution*, March 20, 1889; *Advertiser*, March 24, 1889; *Age-Herald*, Oct. 14, 21, 1913; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284.

⁶⁸ *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Society*, pp. 68-70; *Advertiser*, August 3, 1888; *Advertiser*, March 24, 1889; DuBose, Article No. 79 in Jones v, p. 53.

⁶⁹ *Proceedings, Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, pp. 69, 71, 80; *Advertiser*, March 24, 1889; *Advertiser*, Aug. 3, 1888.

⁷⁰ *News*, Jan. 10, 1926. It may be of interest to state that during the current year, January, 1926, Australia employed the identical scheme used by Alabama forty years earlier. The American papers carried a detailed story of the "College of Agriculture on Wheels used to help Australian Farmers." Too, Alabama is now repeating the stunt.

dispense. The organization formed to meet these demands was the State Agricultural Society, a legally constituted body, begun in Montgomery in June, 1884, as a non-political, purely agricultural adjunct of the department,⁷¹ and to function under the inspection of the commissioner of agriculture. The constitution of the Society⁷² states that 'the object of the Association shall be the collection and diffusion of information pertaining to the productive industries of the state, the promotion of progressive, profitable agriculture, and organization for the advancement of these objects.'

The Society was to be founded⁷³ upon local agricultural clubs throughout the state which might connect themselves with the state organization and recognize its authority. These locals might also coagulate into county and district clubs. Each local unit having not fewer than twelve nor more than twenty bona fide members was entitled to two delegates in the state association.

Immediately after the state association was organized, steps were taken to organize clubs in every county, however, the subordinate clubs grew slowly and often died prematurely.⁷⁴ They were easily organized and popular at first but the novelty soon wore off, and without new life it was difficult to vitalize and perpetuate them.⁷⁵ They lacked the grips, passwords, insignia, and paraphernalia to appeal to the imagination, which were so admirably possessed by its successor, the Alliance.⁷⁶ The parent organ, the State Society, however, grew and flourished, becoming a great assembly because it was a conglomerate built upon the representatives from all local agricultural organizations,⁷⁷ which might desire to affiliate with it as Grange, Wheel, and Alliance. Furthermore the state organization, while under the direct supervision of the commissioner of agriculture, was composed of many of the state's ablest and most scholarly

⁷¹ *Advertiser*, June 20, 1885; *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess., Agric. Soc.* p. 11; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 5; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 350; *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

⁷² *Proceedings, Third Ann. Sess.*, p. 3; Professor J. S. Newman, State Chemist and Director of the Experiment Station at Auburn was the first president.

⁷³ *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 32.

⁷⁴ *Proceedings Third Ann. Sess., Agric. Soc.*, p. 4; *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

⁷⁵ *Proceedings Third Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 58.

⁷⁶ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

⁷⁷ *Advertiser*, Aug. 10, 1888.

men, being closely identified with the Agricultural College at Auburn. The organization secured a lease on life by receiving from the state out of the funds of the department of agriculture an appropriation more than sufficient to pay all its expenses.⁷⁸ The state Society was incorporated by the legislature at its 1886-7 session and an annual appropriation of \$5,000 was made for holding fairs⁷⁹ and other work.

Thus the state organ, which at first was supposed to rest solely upon voluntary subordinate clubs, many of which gradually disintegrated and fell asleep, was given a more substantial backing through the state legislature which was authorized to appropriate taxpayers' money. Indeed, the subordinate societies by 1890 were perhaps more moribund than the Grange itself,⁸⁰ but by rallying around the agricultural department, the Society might be depended upon to foster interest so long as the state appropriation lasted.⁸¹ The Alabama Society was reputed to be one of the liveliest and strongest organs in the South. At the outset the state press spoke in terms of optimism regarding the beneficent possibilities of this new official farmers' association.⁸²

The second annual meeting of the Society was held at Auburn,⁸³ August 5-7, 1885, being attended by more than 150 delegates from the county clubs. Much enthusiasm prevailed, excellent addresses being delivered by Commissioner Betts, Colonel Sam Will John of Selma, Captain Kolb, and others.

Some opinion as to the character of service rendered by the organization may be gathered from the *Proceed-*

⁷⁸ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889; *Proceedings Fifth Sess.*, p. 61.

⁷⁹ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 282; *Acts*, 1887, p. 72; *Acts*, 1888-9, p. 52; *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 61.

⁸⁰ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Proceedings Fifth Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 61. Commenting upon the Agricultural Society, one of the leading daily papers of the state, interested primarily in the agricultural welfare, said in June, 1885, that the farmers were organizing into clubs around which all farmers might rally, and the outlook was bright for a career of usefulness. The society was to be free from politics. "There will be," said the *Advertiser*, "no politics about it. They have ruined the usefulness of enough agricultural organizations already. The farmers are waking up. It is time. They have made up their minds that Alabama is good enough to remain in." These words were printed before the Alliance entered the state. (*Advertiser*, June 20, 1885.)

⁸³ *Advertiser*, June 20, 1885; *Advertiser*, July 25, 1925.

ings of the Third Annual Session held at Talladega,⁸⁴ August 18 and 19, 1886, with 79 delegates from 23 counties and one from Atlanta, Georgia.⁸⁵

After the meeting was called to order by President Newman, addresses of welcome were made by W. H. Skaggs, "Ku Klux" Mayor of Talladega, and Hugh McEldery. Mayor Skaggs characterized it as the most important body that had ever assembled in that city, and he spoke in his usual virulent fashion. Alabama had 77 per cent of its population engaged in agricultural pursuits, yet no state presented such striking evidences of the poverty of its leading industrial class. Land was of the lowest commercial value.⁸⁶ Thriving industrial centers like Birmingham and Anniston were rising, but the bulk of the state's population was in a worse condition than five years before, and indications pointed to a growing depression in the leading industry of the state. Excuses were legion for the existence of such conditions. The Civil War fell most disastrously upon the farming interests, yet "sufficient time had elapsed to preclude the plausibility of that threadbare excuse."

These five causes were suggested as reasons for the existing conditions in the state:⁸⁷ (1) The ineptitude of the present generation; (2) the rapidly increasing evils of the labor system; (3) the growing tendency of landlordism; (4) the corruption of political parties; and (5)

⁸⁴ *Proceedings*, pp. 6 ff.

⁸⁵ *Proceedings Third Sess.*, p. 70.

⁸⁶ Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 578. Land values in 1870 were about 40 per cent of their value in 1860.

⁸⁷ *Proceedings Third Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, pp. 6-7. Compare expressions from a group of farmers at Columbia, S. C. three months earlier in substance as follows:

1. The general depression of the farming interests throughout the Southern states is not the result of bad state legislation or unwise administration, but is directly traceable to our unwise system of raising all cotton and buying everything we use in foreign markets.

2. The present impoverished conditions of the farmers of the state are attributable to the following causes: (1) A false idea of the profits of cotton; (2) a ruinous system of tenantry; (3) a ruinous system of farming without care for the preservation of the fertility of the soil; (4) a careless and willful giving away of money for worthless fertilizers; (5) the shameful neglect to raise the necessary supplies for home consumption; (6) the careless and unbusinesslike manner of managing and financiering, and contracting debts; (7) the lack of practical fellowship among farmers; and (8) the neglect to raise stock sufficient to supply the farm. (See *Charleston Courier*, May 3, 1886; *Advertiser*, May 6, 1886.)

the lack of educational advantages.

Under cause (1) naturally fell the complete and sudden change in agricultural conditions, especially as regards labor, due to the war and ten years of reconstruction. Men accustomed to the ante-bellum system, grown old under pre-war conditions, were unable to adjust themselves readily to the newer state of affairs. It was not so much the fault of the men, now past their meridian, as the fault of the system. "Men who were identified with the industries and brought up under the institutions of ante-bellum days could no more fit themselves into the conditions and demands of the present hour than the friends of the old Bourbon dynasty could fit themselves to the institutions of the Third Republic."

Although the war was the remote cause of present woes, the past must be forgotten, and present signs of decay must be checked. The young men were leaving the farms for better wages in the industrial sections, "and the old men were well-nigh undone by the disappointments which had rested upon them these many years." The fertile fields of former years were now encumbered, neglected, and barren. "It seems," said Mr. Skaggs, "that there is fitness for nothing on the old farm save the tattered and dusty tenant and his starving mule which has not been able to read his title clear for the past twenty years." As one of the state's greatest thinkers put it: "The brain, nerve, and ambition of Alabama were leaving the state."⁸⁸

Aside from the conditions of white labor, the negro was considered poorer, more dependent, and less useful than ten years previous. Although he had lost his political leader, he was still an important factor in the institutions of the state. Temporarily⁸⁹ inactive politically, he was far from political death, for already were there great diversities of opinion in the dominant white party. Great questions were ahead to be decided upon, yet already there had been felt the breeze of a coming storm in the Democratic party, and it would be only a matter of time till the negro would again be in the hands of crafty leaders.

Lack of education, landlordism and political corruption were pictured as dangerous evils. Private corporations were coming into control of the state's resources. Mr.

⁸⁸ *Proceedings Third Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁹ *Proceedings Third Ann. Sess.*, p. 7.

Skaggs confessed that he as a Democrat could not shut his eyes to the evils in his own party and that if four more years of Democratic rule in Alabama were continued under the same policy as the past four years there would be little to boast of in comparison with the Republican party. He pictured the rascality and ignorance existing among not a few of the officers as a disgrace to a great party and a shame to the poor citizens of the state.⁹⁰

Mr. McElderry attributed the lack of agricultural progress to ignorance and inertia and not to the credit system and monopolies. These were symptoms of disease. The cause lay in the people themselves.

President Newman's address was full of counsel for the farmers, the burden of his remarks being that agricultural life in Alabama was stagnant because of the low standard of education, hereditary adherence to unprogressive ideas and practices, and a defective labor system, with the land owner leaving his farm to an ignorant, shiftless tenant without supervision. Then, too, the farmer, in contrast to men of other vocations, seldom worked more than six months a year; there were too many idle land owners; too little attention given to the small industries—as dairy, poultry, bees, fruits, vegetables, and to agricultural diversification; too little attention was given to the beautification, comforts and conveniences of the home.

A legislative committee whose duty it was to keep closely in touch with the law-making body for the good of the farmers was appointed; resolutions were adopted in convention urging people of other sections to discredit the old misrepresentations, manufactured for political purposes against the South, and to come to Alabama regardless of religious creed or political opinion, to share in its healthful climate, rich soil, and vast resources.⁹¹

⁹⁰ *Proceedings Third Ann. Sess.*, p. 9. Skaggs became prominent among the Populists. One might surmise that a few such addresses would probably tend to divert an agricultural organization to political ends.

⁹¹ *Proceedings, Third Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 45. One of the most spicy portions of the entire proceedings of the Talladega session was the "Experience Meeting". The following query, with answers by different members is both instructive and interesting.

Query: "What is the best way to improve the darkeys as a laboring class? Answers. 1. Work him hard and pay cash every week. 2. Treat him honestly and fairly—as a human being and not as a brute. 3. Comply with your contract and compel him

In a three-day session at Huntsville in August, 1888 with I. F. Culver of Union Springs as president, the Society took a bold and favorable stand for education; sent a memorial to the legislature on immigration, asking \$25,000 for that purpose; and unanimously resolved that the Alabama railroads should consider carefully the example practiced by the Georgia railroads during the last fifteen years of giving free transportation to all members who might attend the conventions of the Agricultural Society. Commissioner Kolb was made a committee of one to present the resolution to the railroads requesting free transportation.⁹²

The activities of local agricultural clubs as coöperative purchasing agents had been rather pronounced and beneficial. It was customary for them to buy fertilizer, a commodity of vital concern to cotton growers and many other goods at a great saving, usually about 25 per cent. That is, acid phosphate which ordinarily retailed at say \$26 a ton could be had for \$18 on the coöperative basis. In Lee county, e. g., with a well organized local unit, bagging and ties were ordinarily bought at a great saving. In fact, the question of the price of cotton bagging and the bagging trust were vital matters before the Huntsville convention in August, 1889. President Culver had urged a large attendance in order that there might be full discussion of this important matter which he said cost the farmers of Alabama two million dollars a year.⁹³ Over a million people in the state were engaged in making cotton and they consumed yearly five million yards, which had jumped in price from 7 cents to 11 cents a yard. Mr. Culver thought a \$25,000 bagging mill erected in Montgomery would break the trust price for Alabama. The convention voted an endorsement of Commissioner Kolb's administration and lauded his work.⁹⁴ The fifth

to comply with his, and quit renting land to him. Work him under your own supervision. 4. "Export him and raise the mule instead," was the independent retort offered by one, without applause.

⁹² See *Advertiser*, Jan. 3, 1888, also *Proceedings Fourth Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, pp. 12, 32.

The railroads in 1886 agreed to transport all exhibits to the State Fair at Montgomery at one freight rate and return them free, and all railroads agreed to reduce passenger rates to the Fair to three cents a mile, round trip, except the Western Railway, which made a round trip rate of two cents a mile. (*Proceedings Third Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.* p. 40; *Advertiser*, Aug. 10-11, 1888.)

⁹³ *Advertiser*, Aug. 2, 11, 1888.

⁹⁴ *Advertiser*, Aug. 2, 1888; Aug. 11, 1888.

annual convention of the Socceity met at Union Springs, the home of President Culver, the latter part of July, 1889.⁹⁵ Many prominent men of the state and some out-state men were present, one of whom was R. J. Sledge of Texas, President of the National Alliance. Alliance members appear to have played a big part in the program, the welcome address being given by Colonel D. F. McCall, on behalf of the Farmers' Alliance of Union Springs. He quoted from the "poet laureate of the State Alliance"—John Burns of Dallas County—as follows:

"Of what avail
Is sea or sail
Or steam or rail
Or life itself
If farming fail?"

THE FARMERS ALLIANCE.

Just as the grievances of the farmers had been cumulative, so had their weapons of defense or means toward relief evolved slowly. When once an organization was established in one section of the country it spread like a forest fire to other sections, near and far. The organizations were not exactly alike in the different sections or states. This initial period of agricultural coöperation was largely one of experimentation. The oppressed classes were reaching in all directions for relief and were willing to try any scheme which might offer hope for alleviating the existing burdens.

Among the early agricultural organizations⁹⁶ in the South was the Agricultural Wheel which originated in opposition to the obnoxious farm mortgage system.⁹⁷ Crop diversification and emancipation from merchant domination were aims of the organization which in some states put forward a comprehensive legislative program

⁹⁵ *Age-Herald*, July 31, 1889; DuBose, Article No. 81 in Jones, V, p. 55. Either for political or economic reasons the legislature in 1890 withdrew the \$5,000 annual appropriation to the agricultural Society. Henceforth it had an empty treasury. (See *Address* of President Hawkins at Dothan, August 24, 1892, in the *Dothan Recorder* of Aug. 13; *Acts*, 1890-91, p. 64. The next convention was held in Birmingham in the summer of 1890, where valuable papers were read, and a resolution adopted condemning the Lodge Force Bill.

⁹⁶ DuBose, Article No. 81 in Jones, V, p. 54; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 667.

⁹⁷ Commons, *History of Labor in the United States*, II, p. 490; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 116.

among which were demands relating to legal tender, currency, taxation and usury laws.⁹⁸ The Wheel came into Alabama in the 'eighties, but it seems to have achieved no significant results among a landholding class, due partly to the rumor that it had socialistic tendencies and especially to the fact that it was overshadowed by the State Agricultural Society and the Farmers' Alliance, each of which received favorable legislative recognition.⁹⁹

In Louisiana the Farmers' Union had been established as a result of hard times among the farmers due to the low price of cotton in the 'eighties. The Farmers' Union merged in 1887 with the Alliance from Texas into the Farmers' Alliance and Coöperative Union only to unite a year later with the Agricultural Wheel, whose purpose was almost identical, into the Farmers' and Laborers' Union of America.¹⁰⁰ It will later be observed that at the St. Louis convention in December, 1889, the latter organization united with the Knights of Labor under the name National Farmers' Alliance and Coöperative Union, frequently called the Southern Alliance.¹⁰¹

The Alliance had originated in Texas as early as 1875 and from there had spread to other states. The first branch¹⁰² of the Farmers' Alliance in Alabama was founded at Beach Grove, Madison county, by A. T. Jacobson, organizer, from the Texas Alliance. The installation took place in March, 1887, and other alliances were rapidly installed in Limestone, Marshall, and Jackson counties, and the order soon spread over the state. A state organization was formed in the same year with W. C. McKelvey as President, and G. W. Jones as secretary. A second meeting of the State Alliance was held in 1887 in which all the local units or lodges were united under one head, Reverend S. M. Adams being elected president and J. W. Brown secretary.¹⁰³ At the 1886-7 session of the general

⁹⁸ McVey, *Populist Movement*, p. 198; *Acts*, 1884-1885, p. 63; *Acts*, 1886-7, p. 212; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 567.

⁹⁹ *Advertiser*, August 17, 1887.

¹⁰⁰ M. J. White, "Populism in Louisiana", in *Miss. Valley Historical Rev.* V, pp. 1-4; Drew, "The Present Farmers' Movement," in *Political Science Quarterly*, VI, pp. 282-283; DuBose, Article No. 74, in *Age-Herald*, October 21, 1913; Haynes, *Third Party Movements*, p. 229; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 117.

¹⁰¹ Drew, *loc. cit.*; McVey, *Political Movement*, p. 198; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 122.

¹⁰² McVey, *op. cit.*, p. 198. *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Annual Session Agricultural Society*, p. 35; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 117; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 567.

¹⁰³ *Proceedings Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 35.

assembly the Alliance was incorporated¹⁰⁴ as a non-partisan, agricultural organization.¹⁰⁵

There was no mystery associated with the mere name of the Farmers' Alliance. Ostensibly it was nothing more than "another" farmers' organization, composed of such farmers as wished to ally themselves in an effort to attain the goal which was impossible of attainment individually. Starting as a farmers club, it later became 'allied' with various other working groups, especially city laborers, which alliance both strengthened and weakened it in that the two groups had many desires not in common, and it was impossible to harmonize their aims.¹⁰⁶ The Alliance, however, became almost from the first a political instrument.¹⁰⁷ It was secret and possessed all that brotherhood and mystery calculated to capture the imagination which had made the Grange so popular, but which the Agricultural Society lacked. The Alliance also possessed a constitution and by-laws which if followed strictly would have avoided the political rocks on which the Western Grange stranded. The peculiar mission of the Alliance was to stand between the producer and to eliminate the middleman, improve home life, promote education, build factories and procure needed legislation.

By 1887 the Alliance was spoken of as a boon to the agricultural interests of the country. This united effort was considered to be rendering good fruit, causing the

¹⁰⁴ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 282; *Acts*, 1886-7, p. 385.

¹⁰⁵ *Advertiser*, June 21, 1887. An alliance was organized June 20, 1887 at Calera, Shelby county, officers were elected and all present listened to praises of Henry George. Some twenty-five farmers were present at this secret meeting. Among the prime movers of the new organization were W. C. Griffith, district organizer; W. S. Easterling, editor of the *Alliance News* published at Calera; and W. H. Davidson, publisher of the *Labor Advocate*, also at Calera. W. H. Davidson spoke earnestly against monopolies and urged his hearers to follow the doctrines of Henry George, the famous single tax advocate.

By 1889 there were in Alabama organizations of (1) the Grange, with Colonel Hiram Hawkins, a native Kentuckian, now a cotton planter of Barbour county as president; (2) the Farmers' Alliance, with S. M. Adams, Baptist preacher of Bibb county as president; (3) the Alabama division of the Farmers' National Congress, with Commissioner Kolb as president; (4) the State Agricultural Wheel; (5) the State Agricultural Society, non partisan, with I. F. Culver of Bullock as president. (DuBose, Art. No. 81, in Jones, V, p. 55; *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.)

¹⁰⁶ *Age Herald*, March 13, 1889.

¹⁰⁷ Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 567; Shippee, *Recent American History*, p. 60.

cancellation of mortgages, liquidation of debts, and teaching directly¹⁰⁸ or indirectly economy, thrift, knowledge and independence. No more mortgages, no more credit system, no more crop liens, and pay as you go, became the Alliance's slogan. Its original aims and teachings were regarded as entirely wholesome and proper. Any organ¹⁰⁹ with so salutary a platform was bound to attract masses of aggrieved farmers. The membership was now estimated at as high as 125,000.

Not content with recommendations to the legislature as to educational and industrial reforms¹¹⁰ the Alliance, like its forerunner and contemporary the Grange, tried its own hands at the game of business. Its scheme contemplated the building of factories for tools, farm machinery and vehicles, and shoe factories and warehouses to protect "the farmers from the grasping monopolies, blood-sucking trusts, heartless usurers and extortioners."¹¹¹ The year 1889 was an unusually active year for the farmers' movements. All organizations seemed to take on new life.¹¹² The Alliance was in the ascendancy in Alabama. That year was truly a landmark in its history. The Alabama farmer was apparently coming into his own. He was no longer ignored by legislative assemblies but now seemed to control their destinies to such an extent as to be able to procure exceedingly favorable consideration.

An act of the legislature approved February 6, 1889, incorporated¹¹³ the unique Farmers' Alliance Exchange, a stock corporation whose subscription and membership were restricted to farmers. This in itself was a great political favor to the Alliance, for the legislature thus showed friendship to it by a charter which caused it to be a competitor with almost all other industries. "The Alliance Exchange", says DuBose,¹¹⁴ was the most com-

¹⁰⁸ *Age-Herald*, July 3, 24, 1889; *Advertiser*, January 3, 1889.

¹⁰⁹ *Advertiser*, January 3, 1889.

¹¹⁰ *Advertiser*, January 3, 1889; *Age-Herald*, July 30, 1890; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 564. Most of these demands on educational matters were achieved within the next twenty years.

¹¹¹ DuBose, Article No. 81 in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 55.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Acts*, 1888-9, p. 287; DuBose, Article No. 82, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 59.

¹¹⁴ DuBose, Article No. 81, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 59; *Acts*, 1888-9, pp. 287-288. The act of incorporation gave the Exchange power to conduct a mercantile business; to act as agents for the purchase and sale of farm and orchard products; to act as forwarding agents for all kinds of commodities; to erect, manage

prehensive corporation ever known to the laws of Alabama. Too, it was the only corporation protected by law whose membership was limited to the members of an oath-bound association. Its charter was world wide.

After much delay and keen rivalry on the part of Florence, Birmingham, Gadsden, Selma, and Montgomery the Exchange Headquarters were finally located at Montgomery.¹¹⁵

Common indeed were Alliance warehouses, acting in various capacities, especially as purchasing headquarters for county units. Agents bought farm supplies and sold them to Alliance members at about cost for cash or on promissory notes.¹⁶¹ Numerous Alliance "Co-ops" claimed to have saved much money for their members. But the Alliance Exchange itself, clothed with utmost legal authority, seems never to have been a real success. It became involved in various enterprises which proved liabilities rather than assets to the farmers' efforts. One of these unsuccessful business adventures was an attempt to revive at Florence an old cotton mill to manufacture cotton bagging to kill the jute trust. Plans were on foot and ground secured to erect a \$300,000 cotton mill but it ended there.¹¹⁷ However, a year later the papers carried the joyful news that the Exchange would advance \$35 a bale, an exporting arrangement having been made whereby the farmer was to get what his cotton netted in the Liverpool market. The Exchange was said to be prepared to handle 500,000 bales and to advance \$35 a bale on insured cotton in warehouses.¹¹⁸

and operate warehouses, stockyards, grain elevators and packing establishments; to manufacture fertilizers; operate a banking business, railroads, telegraph lines, steamboats, etc.

¹¹⁵ *Advertiser*, July 9, 1889; *Advertiser*, June 23, 1889; *Age-Herald*, July 3, 1889; Nov. 20, 1889; June 26, 1889. It was first thought that Birmingham had secured it permanently with its offer of \$100,000 in money and land. An Alliance warehouse began work there but the Exchange was later set up in the capital city. The fact that it was an agricultural center as well as a railroad center probably helped Montgomery to get it. While in Birmingham, Dr. D. H. Bone of Madison county was the general manager, with George F. Gaither of Etowah as secretary. Gaither later became a leading Populist. (*Advertiser*, Aug. 7, 1889; July 19, 1889; *Advertiser*, Mar. 24, 1889; DuBose, Article No. 83; Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 60.)

¹¹⁶ DuBose, Article No. 81 in Jones, V, p. 55.

¹¹⁷ *Proceedings, Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, pp. 27-31.

¹¹⁸ *Age-Herald*, Oct. 1, 1890. An Alliance Shoe factory (The Sweetwater Shoe Company) at Florence increased its capital stock from \$25,000 to \$100,000 already employing thirty hands, and was

The Agricultural Society as a child of the Agricultural Department, with its destinies shaped and controlled largely by the commissioner, continued to fight the bagging trust as did the Grange and Alliance. The various county alliances "resolved" to use no more jute bagging the next year, even though a substitute might cost a little more. They must kill the bagging and fertilizer monopolies.¹¹⁹ Delegates of the several organs of the state met in Birmingham, May 15, 1889 to consider modes of successfully combating the injustice of the jute trust.¹²⁰ It was really a business meeting of the National Farmers' Alliance and Coöperative Union of America called by C. W. Macune, President. In calling the meeting to order and expressing his gratification at the attendance, President Macune said they had not met to fight anybody but to protect their own interests wisely and justly. S. M. Adams, President of the Alabama Farmers' Alliance was elected permanent chairman. The welcome to Birmingham was given by Captain Joseph F. Johnston, banker, and later governor of the state. He lauded agriculture and the spirit of coöperation being manifested by the farmers who so badly needed protective laws. It was here that the bagging trust seems to have been forced to yield. The farmers decided to make their own bagging¹²¹ out of cotton, which could be manufactured at 12¹/₂ cents a yard at the factory. The very fact that they could now use much of their own cotton for bagging manufacturing would be an aid to them. But the Alliance does not seem to have gone into the actual manufacture of cotton bagging, its purpose being partially achieved when by a threat to establish its own factories "the Jute Trust" put the price of its bagging at less than 11 cents a yard. On seven million bales it was estimated that Southern cotton

soon to employ several hundred persons for the manufacture of all grades of shoes from brogans to fine "Congress" shoes. It was expected to put out 600 pairs daily. Plans were launched for the manufacture of plows and farm implements in Montgomery, and cotton ties in Birmingham, and under the auspices of either state or local alliances, was begun the work of building factories of various kinds, and huge schemes were contemplated, often though without expert knowledge to formulate their plans. (*Age-Herald*, July 24, August 28, Oct. 2, 1889; *Advertiser*, March 25, 1891.)

¹¹⁹ *Age-Herald*, May 29, 1889.

¹²⁰ *Advertiser*, April 26, 1889; *Age-Herald*, May 22, 1889.

¹²¹ *Age-Herald*, May 22, 1889; DuBose, Article No. 81 in Jones, *Scrap Book*, p. 55. The Tallassee (Elmore county) mills were manufacturing a coarse cotton thread which some proposed as a substitute for jute.

growers would save almost two million dollars annually. Thus the Alliance in bringing this formidable monopoly to terms in 1889, became the first "trust buster" at least a year before the passage by Congress of the so-called Sherman Anti-Trust Act.¹²²

A third legislative act in behalf of the farmers, one in which Commissioner Kolb was particularly interested, provided that Farmers' Institutes should be held all over the state under the direction of the commissioner of agriculture. In passing this bill, itself a boon to Kolb, the legislature practically turned over a master¹²³ key to him. The act authorized institutes to be held in all parts of the state under the direction of the commissioner who was empowered by law to employ and pay the expenses of lecturers and prominent farmers to help him on agricultural topics.¹²⁴

In the light of future events, quite significant is the following language used by F. N. Nesbit of Russell county, before the State Agricultural Society, February, 1889, urging the passage by the legislature of the Institute bill. Nesbit, a member of the lower house of the general assembly, said: "The law makes it his duty to look after immigration If this bill passes allowing the commissioner to organize institutes throughout the state, and if Captain Kolb *has full power and sway to conduct them as he wishes, I am satisfied that he will in less than five years have the agriculturists of the state fully educated as to a sense of their duties in regard to this department.*"¹²⁵ The bill passed and no one doubted that one with Kolb's ambition and ingenuity would not fail to use the law to its limit. The commissioner immediately put the institute law into practice,¹²⁶ and it really became the "Alliance on Wheels." Such special legislative favors were never before granted to the farmers of Alabama.¹²⁷ Possessing that "*full power and sway*" which Mr. Nesbit had insisted should be given the commissioner, within five

¹²² *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

¹²³ *Proceedings, Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, Feb., 1889, pp. 75, 80. Governor Jones' message Nov. 16, 1892, called attention to the possible abuse of the farmers' institutes in a political way, and urged rigid changes. (*Senate Journal*, 1892-3, pp. 29-30; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 10.)

¹²⁴ DuBose, Article No. 82, in *Jones Scrap Book*, p. 59; *Acts*, 1888-9, pp. 287-8.

¹²⁵ *Proceedings, Fifth Semi-Ann. Sess. Soc.*, p. 80.

¹²⁶ Italics are the author's.

¹²⁷ DuBose, Article No. 82.

years he came indeed near having the whole state governmental machinery within his power.

Commissioner Kolb employed a number of able men as his assistants, possibly due regard being had to the political future. He attended most of the institutes in person, and several of the Democratic papers by this time said that Kolb's handpicked lecturers had soon learned to eulogize their master who was accused of talking more politics than agriculture.¹²⁸ He preached wider participation in governmental affairs by the farmers, cried down with the "party machine," and urged the election of a "farmer governor," saying it had been over thirty years since the state had one.

From its very nature the success of the Alliance demanded publicity. The state press could make or mar the organization. During the early years of the Alliance's existence it had received practically the unanimous¹²⁹ favor of the newspapers. The farming class had, it was generally admitted, been neglected; they had failed to keep pace in organization with other vocations and there was no reasonable objection to their coöperative efforts to improve their *economic* status. The *Age-Herald* was particularly friendly to the farmers' organization and at first the *Advertiser* was also very sympathetic, but a rift occurred. The Alliance meeting¹³⁰ at Auburn in August, 1889, put the *Advertiser* in the Ananias Club by voting resolutions of condemnation because it had published an editorial on jute bagging which the Alliance considered unfriendly.

The Alliance set up its own press, but experienced considerable financial trouble. Some of the journals operated for the Alliance were the *Southern Agriculturist* of Montgomery, and later the *Farmers' Alliance-Advocate*, but neither of these lasted long. Later Frank Baltzell, editor of the *Alliance-Herald* at Montgomery, became the able spokesman for the Alliance group against the machine Democrats.¹³¹

¹²⁸ DuBose, Article No. 82; *Advertiser*, May 28, 1891.

¹²⁹ *Age-Herald*, Aug. 24, 1889 and June 25, 1890; *Advertiser*, Aug. 9, 18, 1889, and Jan. 11, 21, 1890.

¹³⁰ DuBose, Articles Nos. 81 and 83; *Advertiser*, Aug. 9, 18, 1889. The *Advertiser* said the Alliance's attack was a political scheme to kill Colonel Jones' chances for the governorship. In a circular letter, Jan. 1, 1890, President Adams urged Alliance members not to subscribe for the *Advertiser*—"the powerful party organ."

¹³¹ *Age-Herald*, Aug. 20, 1889; DuBose, Article Nos. 81 and 83;

The Alliance was not forgetful of the powers granted it by the legislature, nor was it oblivious to its increasing strength in numbers and in the attention accorded it by the general public.¹³² There were distinct indications by 1889 that the Alliance would aspire to political power either as a new party or try to force the acceptance of its policies by the party in control of the government. The organized farmer was in his heyday. The Alliance appeared supreme. Would this organization¹³³ last. Judging from previous agricultural organizations it had no permanent lease on life.¹³⁴

From the day of its advent into Alabama there had been skeptics and doubting Thomases as to the genuine aims of the Alliance. So far, they could charge no corruption in action to it, but they feared the presence of the traditional "negro in the woodpile." They expected the Alliance to turn itself over-night into some horrible monster. Once organized and properly aroused, it would be able to wield a formidable weapon.¹³⁵

In the summer of 1889 it was prophesied that a new era in Alabama politics would have dawned before twelve more months. "The forces are already organizing and several classes of the people who have ills to cure and complaints to remedy are getting together."¹³⁶ By bringing the bagging trust to its knees much had already been accomplished and the farmers had confidence. They constituted a large majority of the population, represented the largest property interests, and were more largely affected by legislation than any other class. Why should they not go into politics? Not merely the agriculturists but the "Knights of Labor," another large and growing class in the industrial section of Alabama, were also making plans to take a hand in the coming campaign. Free labor complained of being forced to work in mines with convict labor, that it was wrong both financially and morally, and that the lease system should be abolished.¹³⁷

The Alliance claimed not to be in politics as a body, yet it was the duty of its members to consider and discuss

Advertiser, Sept. 10, 1889, and Feb. 2, 1890.

¹³² Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284.

¹³³ *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1889.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Age-Herald*, July 31, 1889.

¹³⁶ *Age-Herald*, July 31, 1889; Schlesinger, *New Viewpoints*, p. 120.

¹³⁷ *Age-Herald*, June 12, 1889.

all laws and measures that might benefit or discriminate against the agricultural classes. Several local Alliances passed resolutions protesting against political activities and asked by what authority such could be done.¹³⁸ Some individual members, however, boldly expressed a hope that the Alliance might enter politics and elect every officer from president down to bailiff. Other members urged that the Democratic party should reform and adopt principles bearing equitably on all classes and not give capital prominence over labor.

The Alliance had been expected to play a vital part in the Democratic convention of 1888—only a year after the Alliance entered the state—but all went off without excitement. It was generally conceded however that the next campaign would not pass without a hard fight from the farmers. All signs after the convention of 1888 pointed to a climax two years hence.¹³⁹ President Adams, head of the State Alliance during practically its entire period of existence, was charged with a studious effort to throw the Alliance into politics in 1888 by urging Alliancesmen to pick out in Alliance meetings delegates to the county conventions.¹⁴⁰ By getting together they could, it is said, control the elections and fill all offices with their members. Mr. Adams was charged with urging the members not to be weak kneed in regard to entering the political arena,¹⁴¹ however it was believed by the Democratic papers that fully nine-tenths of the Alliance members at this time were opposed to participation in politics as a corporate body.

The state press as a whole deprecated the idea of a new third party, averring that there was no interest in the state which was not better served by reason of the Democratic party being the controlling influence, that such was easily accounted for by contrasting the character of those in control with the forces in opposition to stable government.¹⁴² So great was the turmoil and disaster during the few years when the Democratic party was kept out of control as to cause Alabamians for generations to pray for deliverance from the return of such a calamity. The more influential papers could not believe the farmers

¹³⁸ *Advertiser*, May 2, 1889; *Advertiser*, April 15, 1888.

¹³⁹ *Advertiser*, June 15, 1888.

¹⁴⁰ *Advertiser*, Feb. 5, 1890.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Proceedings Semi-Ann. Sess. Agric. Soc.*, p. 49; *Advertiser*, April 15, 1888.

who belonged to the Grange or the Alliance—largely white Democrats who had helped to redeem the state fifteen years before—could think seriously of organizing on a political basis, thereby disrupting the ‘redeeming’ party and bringing back into power the negro, “the dusky outcast”, as a wedge to disrupt the party and divide the white men. These white men, particularly from the hill sections—uninfluenced by the passions and interests of crowded cities—had ever been relied upon to defend the government in times of peril. It was they who had stood between the state and negro domination. Would the tables now be turned?¹⁴³ Shrewd politicians either feared Alliance potentialities or studied ways whereby they might become attached to this new Hercules and become able through its power to dominate the political affairs of the state.

The annual session of the Alliance was held at Auburn, August 7-9, 1889, with delegates from all counties. Dr. C. W. Macune, President of the National Alliance, and many other notables were there. It was an epochal meeting, an historic convention. Just when the Alliance entered politics is not known, but it was at Auburn in August, 1889, that politics entered the Alliance in an outspoken form. Although there was pretty general apprehension that the Alliance would endeavor to control and dominate the next state convention (1890), up till the Auburn meeting there were no obvious signs of it.¹⁴⁴

This convention showed a spirited temper in opposition to the Democratic and Conservative party, says DuBose, and one delegate said “the Alliance must make its own politicians.”¹⁴⁵ The *Age-Herald* said the Alliance was watching carefully over the people’s pecuniary interests, and was not a political organ, but it wielded a mighty influence in politics.¹⁴⁶

Farmers alone were supposed to be members of the Alliance, lawyers being thus ruled out of its affairs. The State Exchange was a thrust at the merchants, bankers, and railroads. These three groups—odious in the eyes of the average farmer—had no *entree* into Alliance matters.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 25, 1889.

¹⁴⁴ *Age-Herald*, Aug. 14, and June 26, 1889.

¹⁴⁵ DuBose, Article No. 81 in Jones, V, p. 55.

¹⁴⁶ *Age-Herald*, Aug. 14, 1889; DuBose, Article No. 82, Jones, V, p. 59.

¹⁴⁷ DuBose, Article No. 81; *Age-Herald*, Aug. 14, 1889; *Adver-*

Although some discussion had occurred in the state press as to possible candidates for the governorship in 1890, very little publicity had been given to the matter as if the papers feared to stir the question, preferring to let well enough alone. The *Bullock County Reporter*¹⁴⁸ had offered the name of W. S. Reese of Montgomery for governor. Other favorite sons, non-Alliance men, already mentioned, were Crook, Johnston, Richardson and Burke. The *Birmingham Chronicle*, with exact prophesy, said the next governor would be "the man who can beat Tom Jones." The *Eufaula Times* of Kolb's home town, expressed¹⁴⁹ a preference for Kolb, whose name was already before the people. No other person in the whole state had so grand an opportunity or excuse for coming into contact with all the people and no other person began to compare with him in the efficient use made of his opportunity.¹⁵⁰ It was clear before the summer of 1889 was over that Kolb would be one and probably Jones¹⁵¹ the

tiser, Aug. 8, 1889. As stated elsewhere, it was on the occasion of the Auburn convention, while considering the bagging question, that occurred a definite break between the Alliance and the *Advertiser*, the mouthpiece or party organ of the Democrats and Conservatives. On the second day of the convention, the *Advertiser* published a circular of the Liverpool Cotton Exchange to the effect that it would buy no cotton from the U. S. not wrapped in jute bagging. The *Advertiser* had also ascertained that local cotton dealers in Montgomery who usually wrapped 125,000 bales a year had already laid in their year's supply of jute, but these dealers were willing to substitute cotton bagging as fast as the material could be had. Accordingly Editor Screws "suggested in a friendly way to the Auburn convention" that the season was too advanced (cotton was already being ginned) to make a total change from jute bagging. The Alliance then passed resolutions denouncing the *Advertiser* and committed itself against the use of jute. No amount of explaining upon the part of the *Advertiser* could atone.

¹⁴⁸ *Age-Herald*, Aug. 14, 1889. The Alliance adopted unanimously a resolution introduced by Hector D. Lane, complimenting Captain Kolb for his great services to the farmers in his efficient management of the office of Commissioner of Agriculture.

¹⁴⁹ *Advertiser*, Feb. 28, 1889; the *Eufaula Times*, Feb. 26, 1889.

¹⁵⁰ DuBose, Article No. 82 in Jones, V, p. 59; *Advertiser*, Oct. 3, 1889. The general assembly had a big part in shoving Kolb forward as a contestant, for it was his duty by law to hold institutes! Furthermore, Kolb was a member of the Alliance and perhaps its most prominent man. The two secret societies, the Grange and the Alliance—potential rivals—had waged a fight for the commissionership. Governor Seay appointed Kolb, put forward the Alliance, over Hawkins of the same county who was endorsed by the Grange.

¹⁵¹ DuBose, Article No. 82; Jones, V, p. 54; *Advertiser*, April 27, 1889.

other candidate. DuBose said: "Thus early in the preliminaries leading to a bitter internal conflict, and a final rupture of the party, Jones and Kolb became the impersonation respectively of the combatant factions."¹⁵²

While the Auburn convention was on, a "special" to the *Sun* (Columbus, Ga.), said the Alliance would play an important part in the selection of the governor and other officers the next year, a careful poll of members present from almost every county indicating an almost unanimous choice of R. F. Kolb. Only three members, ran the dispatch—all relatives of another candidate—opposed Kolb, who would undoubtedly be the candidate of the Alliancemen for governor, but not of the Alliance! His position as commissioner and the support of the Alliance of which he was a member made him the strongest candidate.¹⁵³ Richardson of Huntsville was reported to have only geographical strength representing northern Alabama, while Jones had only military strength. It was believed that over ninety per cent of the farmers of the state were Alliancemen and eighty per cent of the entire voting strength of the Democratic party were farmers. This strength centered on one man would nominate and elect¹⁵⁴ him. The *Sun* communique said, furthermore, that Kolb and his friends were pushing the matter and if permissible under Alliance rules, he would be their man. The Alliance was not in session to select a gubernatorial candidate acceptable to the farmers, yet the matter was "being pushed earnestly by Mr. Kolb and his friends."¹⁵⁵

Thus the Auburn session of the Alliance was historic,—at least four major events having transpired there, namely: (1) The Alliance's resolutions against the use of bagging; (2) its resolutions against the *Advertiser*, an early attempt at boycotting, which spread to many local Alliances; (3) ratification of the constitution of the Farmers' and Laborers' Union of America as submitted through the Meridian meeting eight months earlier; (4)

¹⁵² DuBose, Article No. 81, in Jones, V, p. 55.

¹⁵³ He was expected to receive almost the solid support of the 100,000 adult white members of the order.

¹⁵⁴ *Advertiser*, Aug. 9, 1889.

¹⁵⁵ *Advertiser*, Aug. 9, 18, 1889. Kolb denied that he was electioneering for the governorship while visiting farmers institutes on state money. Furthermore, he said he was in Montgomery at the time of the "boycott" resolution passed the convention, and did not know of it but had he been there at the time it came up he would have fought it.

the definite plunge of the Alliance into politics.¹⁵⁶

The year 1889 witnessed several important farmers' conventions other than that at Auburn. The most significant of these was the Farmers' National Congress which convened for a three-day session in Montgomery in November. This gathering was fraught with tremendous possibilities either for good or bad.¹⁵⁷ The largest number of delegates and the most states were represented of any agricultural conference in the United States. This auspicious meeting was the result of the energy of its President, Commissioner Kolb, since the Chicago meeting in 1887.¹⁵⁸ It had a high class of delegates from all parts of the South and West, as well as from nearly all of the Central States. Governor Seay was expected to speak but is reported to have withdrawn upon seeing the inclination of the delegates to dwell upon political questions, especially the money question. Delegates from twenty-three of the states were appointed by the governors and it was dominated by northern leaders. Especially prominent was Judge W. H. Lawrence of Ohio, an old Granger and Republican, "a famous lobbyist" at Washington for the National Woolgrowers Association. The Congress by 170 to 89 voted resolutions favoring a high protective tariff and an excise tax, thus appeasing the woolen interests. The southern delegates opposed the tariff resolution, claiming that the vote was on a sectional basis, and that the delegates should not be appointed by governors on a political basis but elected by their respective agricultural organizations.¹⁵⁹ An elaborate set of resolutions set forth the farmers' ills against the banks, railroads, manufacturies; demanded that Congress improve trade relations with South America; improve irrigation and navigation facilities in the West, and urged the farmers to vote to right the wrongs and discriminations against them. Kolb on motion of Lawrence and a second from Smith (once Radical Governor of Alabama), was re-elected president¹⁶⁰ unanimously. This was considered a

¹⁵⁶ *Advertiser*, Aug. 18, 1889; *Age-Herald*, Dec. 24, 1889. Four months later Kolb formally announced his candidacy in the *Age-Herald*.

¹⁵⁷ *Advertiser*, Nov. 16, 1889.

¹⁵⁸ DuBose, Article No. 79, in Jones, V, p. 53.

¹⁵⁹ DuBose, Article No. 80.

¹⁶⁰ *Advertiser*, Nov. 27, 1889. This congress was held at Montgomery while the Southern Exposition Fair was in session, and on November 12, Alliance Day, people came by thousands, in trains, wagons, buggies, carriages and on foot. Commissioner

political trick to break the solid South.

Thus the Alliance¹⁶¹ as an ostensible agricultural order was now ready to plunge forth as the precursor of the next political monument in the state, namely, the Populist party.

“Why should the farmer delve and ditch,¹⁶²

Why should the farmer’s wife darn and stitch?

The Government can make them rich,

And the People’s Party knows it.

So hurrah, hurrah for great P. P.

1 = 7 and 0 = 3

A is B and X is Z

And the People’s Party knows it!”

Kolb and L. F. Livingston, President of the Georgia Alliance, and S. M. Adams, President of the Alabama Alliance, addressed the throngs. (*Advertiser*, Nov. 13, 1889; DuBose, Article No. 79, in Jones, V, p. 53.)

¹⁶¹ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 282; DuBose, Article No. 82; *Advertiser*, March 13, 1889.

¹⁶² Quoted from Greensboro, (N. C.) *Record*, by J. D. Hicks, in *N. C. Hist. Rev.*, April, 1925.

CHAPTER IV

THE ALLIANCE ENTERS POLITICS

THE ST LOUIS "PLATFORM" AND THE OCALA "DEMANDS."

Beginning with the year 1890 the people of Alabama passed through six years of economic distress and political upheaval never before or since equaled in ferocity. All the factors and agencies of discontent which had been developing during the two preceding decades seemed now to burst forth in all their fury. Economical and non-political agencies formed for the relief of the rural people finding their achievements short of expectations, cast aside their non-political garments and engaged in party politics hoping to obtain through political action what they had failed otherwise to accomplish.¹ With the two-party system so thoroughly entrenched—indeed one might almost say the one-party system in Alabama—it meant much forty years ago to break loose from the old party alignment. Even to suspect party disloyalty was anathema. The Democratic party was sacred to the South especially to the machine politicians, and no thought of defection or a division in the party could be tolerated. White supremacy was ever emblazoned before their eyes.² A strong effort was made by the farmers and laborers, through the Alliance, to win their aims in the Democratic party, but failing either to obtain relief or to break the power of the Democratic machine, the Alliance's next step was independent political action, with the hope of fusing with all political forces other than the Democrats, the party in power. Indeed it was a left wing of the Democratic party. From the beginning, opposition from the Democratic press was quite more severe than that from the Republican. Evidences of desire for fusion between Republicans and Populists were not lacking from the first. These were minority parties and success could be anticipated only by coöperation.³ This was quite the reverse of the alignment in the West where Democrats and Populists often united.

¹ A. T. Goodwyn, *loc. cit.*

² Brown, *Lower South*, pp. 248 ff.

³ Delap, *The Populist Party in N. C.*, p. 50; Haynes, *Third Parties*, *passim*

It is the purpose of Chapters IV and V to show, with considerable detail, the gradual transition of the Alliance into politics,⁴ first within the Democratic party, but failing to capture that party in 1890, then to launch into the Populist movement as such in 1892 where the contest raged with continued bitterness at the next two biennial elections. Political parties in the United States are national and not merely state affairs. A party bounded by state lines could never be influential under our system. It is the national and not the state organization that formulates platforms and sets the standards, other than mere local issues, to which the state organizations adhere. This being true, what happened in Alabama, for instance, in connection with the Populist party was determined to no small degree by the activities of the national organization. The virus was in the air and affected all that came within its swoop. Hence the necessity for an understanding of the various national conventions, first of the Alliance and later of the People's party. In all there were some five national conventions⁵ which shaped the activities of the new political party of the early 'nineties. Two of these were held before the Alliance had made the recognized plunge into a party organization. The first was at St. Louis in December, 1889, and the second at Ocala, Florida, a year later, December, 1890. Although no definite agreement as to launching a third party was made at either of these conferences,⁶ the question was warmly discussed, and the Alliance "demands" outlined at these conferences formed the fundamental tenets of the People's party of 1892. These two conferences were quasi-political.

The St. Louis convention of December, 1889 followed closely upon the heels of the several farmers' conferences held in Alabama during the autumn of 1889. It was a joint conference of the National Farmers' Alliance and the Knights of Labor in an effort to fuse the two organizations.⁷ The St. Louis convention resulted in an

⁴ Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307.

⁵ McVey, *Populist Movement*, pp. 136-138; Morgan, *Wheel and Alliance*, pp. 147-184.

⁶ McVey, *loc. cit.*; *Advertiser*, Dec. 22 and 24, 1889.

⁷ McVey, *Populist Movement*, page 137; Muzzey, *United States*, II, p. 230; DuBose, Article No. 82 in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V. 59; *Advertiser*, Jan. 15 and 17, 1890; Appleton, *Cyclopædia*, 1890, pp. 299-301. Paxson, *Recent History*, pp. 171-2. Alabama's delegates at this convention, which was composed predominantly of southern delegates, had been appointed at the Auburn Alliance Conference

incongruous amalgamation of the farmers and laborers into the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, an oath-bound, secret organization. It was now really a political party but refrained temporarily from declaring itself such.⁸ A comprehensive series of resolutions, expressing the economic demands of the new order were passed. These resolutions or "platforms" and the Ocala "demands" of a year later, with a few subsequent alterations, constituted the platform of the People's or Populist party of 1892. Some of the "radical platforms" of the St. Louis Convention⁹ were (1) Free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ration of 16 to 1; sufficient money to give \$50 per capita; (2) abolition of national banks of issue and the substitution of legal-tender treasury notes issued direct by the government instead of national bank notes, national bank issues being particularly objectionable because they were private corporations and had driven out of existence the state bank notes. These state banks had once supplied to the farmer the necessary currency with farm land as collateral; (3) establishment of Federal subtreasuries where farmers might receive credit or money on the deposit of their agricultural products; (4) government ownership of railroads and other means of transportation and communication as in the case of the United States mails; (5) non-ownership of land by aliens; (6) reduction of postage; (7) an income tax; (8) a bounty to American sugar growers, improvement of trade facilities, irrigation and canalization work by Congress,¹⁰ limitation of state expenses, etc.

Of these propositions or planks which were at the time regarded by many as wild, speculative schemes, none received more severe criticism than the subtreasury plan, which anticipated the issue by the government of money,

in August, 1889. They were President S. M. Adams, Commissioner R. F. Kolb, Major J. H. Harris of the State Dept. of Agriculture and Hector D. Lane of Madison county, editor of one of the Alliance journals. T. J. Carlisle and J. H. Higgins were to represent the State Wheel.

⁸ DuBose, Article No. 79, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V. p. 53; DuBose, Article No. 82, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 59; McVey, *Populist Movement*, p. 137; Muzzey, II, pp. 230, 233.

⁹ McVey, p. 137; DuBose, Article, No. 79, Jones, V, p. 53; F. E. Haynes, "The New Sectionalism" in *Quart. Jr. Econ.*, X, p. 272. Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 129.

¹⁰ DuBose, Article No. 78, Jones, V, p. 52; Arnett, *loc. cit.*, pp. 82 ff; J. R. Commons, *History of Labor in the U. S.*, II, pp. 490 ff; Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 230.

at a very low rate of interest, direct to the farmers in return for agricultural products which they should deposit in warehouses. The government was expected to advance some 80 per cent of the market value of the products deposited. This scheme would have established direct relationship between the government as lender and the individual as borrower through government credit.¹¹ Although hardheaded business men poked fun and sharp words at this plank of the St. Louis platform, it was popular in many sections of the country. It was in a way identical in principle with the operation of the Alabama state bank, 1823-1852, when the state owned and operated banks and lent the state's money to its citizens, from the effects of which the state has never recovered.¹² But the Alliance did not regard the subtreasury plank as a *sine qua non*. "A better plan" than the subtreasury would be gladly accepted by the needy farmers. As Colonel L. L. Polk, President of the National Farmers' Alliance, expressed it in an address previous to the defeat of the subtreasury plan by the United States Senate:¹³ "We do not claim it (the subtreasury plan) as the only measure through which relief may be brought to our suffering and distressed people. . . . We would be only too happy to receive at your hands a wiser and better measure, but the suffering millions must have relief. They ask for bread and will not be content with a stone."

The St. Louis convention pledged its delegates to support only such men as would vote for or favor the "platform" it adopted.¹⁴ Southern Democratic papers considered it an attempt to break and destroy the Democratic party, and incidentally the "solid South." The amalgamation of the Farmers' Alliance with the National Knights of Labor, itself "practically a northern organization of wide influence," appeared inimical to the Democracy of the South.¹⁵ Of the effects of the St.

¹¹ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 130; *The Birmingham News*, Nov. 30, 1891.

¹² Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284; *Cheap-Money Experiments*, pp. 82 ff.; Brown, *Alabama*; see *National Economist*, II, pp. 219 ff., Dec., 1889.

¹³ *Progressive Farmer*, June 19, 1890.

¹⁴ *Advertiser*, Dec. 24, 1889; Arnett, *loc cit*.

¹⁵ Muzzey, *The United States of America* 11, p. 233. Says Muzzey on the attitude of the Southern Alliance toward the second St. Louis conference, Feb. 22, 1892, which "selected a National Committee" to call the Omaha convention of July 2, 1892, where the Populist ticket was announced, on the basis of the St. Louis platform of 1889: "The largest of the farmers' associations, for ex-

Louis propaganda on Alabama, one writer¹⁶ said: "The force of the action at St. Louis proved of determinate adverse effect upon the growth and influence of the Farmers' Alliance in Alabama and worked a revolution in the politics of the state." Individuals, press and alliances began to align themselves regarding the St. Louis propaganda. Delegates to the convention were quizzed and criticised and the question of a third party became paramount.

Upon his return from St. Louis, Commissioner Kolb announced,¹⁷ December 22, 1889, his candidacy in the *Birmingham Age-Herald* for the governorship. He sought the nomination on the Democratic ticket. The *Advertiser*, self-constituted guardian of the orthodox Democratic party, remarked that it would be interesting to hear from Captain Kolb on the platform adopted by the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union as his announcement said nothing of those resolutions.¹⁸ Commissioner Kolb denied having anything to do with the resolutions or knowing anything about them, and denied voting for them.¹⁹ He said he was a Democrat, believed in white supremacy and that there was no idea of a third party in the St. Louis platform²⁰ The Alabama delegates, after being heckled by the attitude of the home people, endeavored to leave the impression that some of the St. Louis resolutions had been thrust upon them. This excuse has little plausibility when it is remembered that most of the delegates were from the South.²¹

Action by the various local alliances followed the St. Louis Convention, many of them endorsing the resolutions and Kolb's candidacy, while others opposed the St. Louis "amalgam," fearing it an attempt of the Northern politicians to disrupt the Democratic party in the South

ample, was the Southern Alliance, which claimed a membership of three million. But delegates from seven southern states threatened to withdraw from the St. Louis conference if an independent political party were formed. Their purpose was to capture and transform the Democratic party. The inevitable negro question forced the whites of the South to hesitate before launching abruptly into Populism as a distinct party."

¹⁶ DuBose, Article No. 80, in Jones, V, p. 54.

¹⁷ *Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 1890.

¹⁸ *Advertiser*, Dec. 24, 1889.

¹⁹ *Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 1890; *Advertiser*, Jan. 7, 15, 18, 24, 1890.

²⁰ *Advertiser* for Jan. 5, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 82, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 59.

²¹ *Advertiser*, Jan. 7, 1890; see Morgan, *Wheel and Alliance*, *passim*.

and to throw the alliance into politics.²² Such was the action of such county alliances as Montgomery, Talladega and Clay, bitterly denouncing the action of the Alabama delegates at St. Louis. These alliances affirmed their intention to resist all efforts to organize the Alliance into politics.²³ They would continue to try to aid the farmers but would not affiliate with other organizations and would repel every attempt to crush the Democratic party of the state.²⁴ On the other hand Tuscaloosa county Alliance, for example, with T. M. Barbour, President, declared openly for Kolb and the entire St. Louis platform.²⁵ Naturally the *Alliance-Advocate* at Montgomery declared favorably toward both Kolb and the resolutions.²⁶ While the *Age-Herald*, friendly to the Alliance, admitted its opposition to the St. Louis platform, with no ill will toward its makers, the *Advertiser* proclaimed it a diabolical plot "Totally undemocratic and subversive of white supremacy in Alabama." It was not warring on the Alliance, but opposed to the idea of a new party as born at St. Louis, and believed as did the *Herald* that real Democrats in the Alliance would stick to their party.²⁷

Not waiting till the opening of the new year, Kolb was in Birmingham December 24, and 25, 1889 and the *Age-Herald* carried an account of an "Interview with the Leading Gubernatorial Candidate," in which Captain Kolb availed himself of the opportunity to set forth his views. The Alliance was not, he said, a political body, but an organization made up of Democrats and Republicans alike. Though a big majority of the Alliance members in Alabama were Democrats, there was nothing in the organization to prevent a member of any party from joining the Alliance. It was composed of farmers who saw the need not only of organization but of legislation, and through the men who made the laws they hoped to secure aid. Mr. Kolb saw no reason why farmers, even though organized, should not discuss their needs as did lawyers, bankers, and boards of trade, and even frame laws and

²² See Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 83, 101.

²³ Henceforth, few took at par the assertions that the Alliance was non-partisan (See H. C. Nixon, *The Populist Movement in Iowa*, p. 43).

²⁴ *Advertiser*, Dec. 24, 1889; *Advertiser* Jan. 5, 1890.

²⁵ *Advertiser*, Jan. 12, 1890.

²⁶ *Advertiser*, Dec. 22, 1889.

²⁷ *Advertiser*, Dec. 26, 1889; Jan. 5, 1890.

have them passed.²⁸ These crafts would not think of voting for men opposed to their interests and the same should be true with farmers. He said the Alliance's position in politics, if it had such, was to educate the farmers to a fuller appreciation of the needs and dangers, and each member of the Alliance was free to act as he pleased on that, and the Alliance had not thought of disorganizing the Democratic party, thereby causing a defeat of all their aims. The Alliancemen were loyal to their party, and would be found in the beat meetings, in the primaries, and in the conventions along with other Democrats who were not Alliance members.

In reply to the criticism that he was using the Alliance and commissionership to ride into office as governor, Captain Kolb said that he had never thought his holding that office disqualified him for, or made it improper, to aspire to the governorship, that it had never been considered improper for a governor to aspire to the United States Senate.²⁹ He denied that he had ever sought the aid of other than Democrats; however, his wide acquaintance with, and long identification with, the farmers made it reasonable for him to hope for large sympathy and support from those whom he had worked to serve; otherwise it would be self-confessed failure on his part. He was a Democrat and would go before the convention as a Democrat,³⁰ "and could not be induced to accept any nomination or office except at the hands of the *organized* Democracy." "I am," said Mr. Kolb, "a candidate before the Democratic party and on the platform of doing all I can to promote the best interests of all the people—farmers and artisans, merchants, and manufacturers, county and city, miner and lumbermen, employer and employee."³¹

²⁸ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 25, 1889.

²⁹ In the light of the provisions of the state Constitution of 1901 Commissioner Kolb probably misstated the facts in this issue.

³⁰ This statement rose often later to plague him.

³¹ *Advertiser*, Dec. 24, 1889; *Age-Herald*, Dec. 25, 1889; *Age-Herald*, Jan. 22, 1890.

Mr. Kolb's political principles were expounded by "Bartemus," a farmer of Uniontown, who defended Kolb's Democracy and upheld his right to participate in government, stating that all complaint was coming from those ineligible to the Alliance, and that Kolb's Democracy could not be a matter of controversy and that the fact that he was sent as a delegate to the St. Louis convention should not impair his democracy. According to Bartemus, "the farmer," Kolb had the best record of any man in the race for governor, the farmers being solid for him and he was "INVINCIBLE

One unique incident of the St. Louis convention was its provision for and appointment of a national lecturer—Benjamin Terrell, a Democrat of Texas, a good speaker and an Allianceman. In his speech of acceptance as national lecturer Terrell said:³² “We made our Congressmen. If they refuse to do as we bid them, we will make others to take their places.” And, interesting enough, Mr. Terrell seems to have made his way straight to Alabama to open his fireworks,³³ for in early January, 1890, this paid lecturer of the National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union was in Alabama “stumping” the state for Kolb, “the Democrat” and advocating the St. Louis platform.³⁴

In a speech at Scottsboro, Jackson county, Terrell said that, since consolidation with the Northern Alliance, they had three million members, a number sufficient to accomplish wonders in politics. Referring to the Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union, he said: “We shall say to our Congressmen, ‘we own you. Do as we tell you or you don’t go back.’ That’s the way the monied powers have dictated to them. It’s our turn now.”³⁵ He denounced all Alabama Congressmen as “frauds,” saying that the Alabama government had been rotten for twenty years; and that the Alliance with the Exchange behind it had all necessary power to control the whole “field of agriculture, manufacturing and commerce.”³⁶

in the black land country. Strict construction of delegated powers, commerce burdened by revenue only, bullion money and white supremacy are Democracy, and if carried to full and fair play will give relief to all and make us the happiest as well as the greatest people on earth.”

³² DuBose, Article No. 82, in Jones, V, p. 59.

³³ *Advertiser*, Jan. 8, 10, and Feb. 1, 1890.

³⁴ *Advertiser*, Jan. 8, 1890.

He urged the people to support an unlimited issue of Greenbacks, government control of railroads and telegraphs, free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, abolition of national banks of issue and direct issues of all paper money by the government itself. He urged Congress to abolish future dealings in cotton and grain, prohibit alien ownership of land, pay off the national debt and not increase it. Only those officers who agreed to support these planks should be voted for by the farmers.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Dubose, Article No. 82, in Jones, V, p. 59; *Advertiser*, Jan. 10, 1890; *Advertiser*, Feb. 1, 1890.

Was not this politics? Why should the Alliance pay a man to stump Alabama in favor of an aspirant for a political office? Was there no danger to the Alliance in such procedure? Were not

While the *Advertiser* had begun hurling its missiles at "Colonel Ben," the *Age Herald*³⁷ was commending him for a great speech at Birmingham on January 7, where he had said the Alliance had only good as its object and had no secrets. He lauded it as having the purest motives of any organization he knew except the Christian religion. Speaking of the Alliance from a political standpoint, he said it had no confidence in any man who would sell his vote, or buy a vote. The Alliance was not solely for the Democrats, but for the improvement of all farmers, and would help them to stay out of debt thus shunning the iniquitous mortgage system. However, Mr. Terrell urged Alliance members to "stay in the party" and deplored the rumors that the Alliance was trying to form a third party.³⁸ Aside from the strictly political aspects, the farmers, as a compactly organized body, were now conscious of the wrongs they were enduring and, thanks to educational campaigns, lectures, speeches and literature, they were aroused to a full realization of their civic duties, and were determined to take more interest in matters where they had been remiss. Many of the farmers realized for the first time that their woes were due partially to their own neglect to participate in beat meetings and primaries, having left these matters to a few who liked to dabble in politics and who had manipulated affairs in their own interests.³⁹

The St. Louis resolutions have been rather fully discussed because of their great effects upon the future history of the Alliance, state and national. In the opinion of J. W. DuBose,⁴⁰ the St. Louis convention and platform, with their aftermath, were largely responsible for the Alliance's failure in its efforts to gain political control of the Alabama political machinery and control of the party convention of 1890.

Another convention, the second in chronology, was to be as influential in many respects as the first and

the policies of the Alabama Alliance being dominated largely from without and by the officers and policies of the National Alliance?

³⁷ *Advertiser*, Jan. 8, 1890; see J. T. Morgan, "Danger of the Farmers' Alliance," in *FORUM*, XII, pp. 399-409, Nov., 1891.

³⁸ *Advertiser*, Jan. 8, 1890.

³⁹ *Age-Herald*, Jan. 1, 1890.

It was by many regarded as a wholesome sign that the farmers were beginning to manifest such an active interest in governmental affairs. Certainly this offense alone was not sufficient justification for proscribing or reading any one out of the party.

⁴⁰ DuBose, Article No. 97, in *Age-Herald*.

although this convention was held after the 1890 elections, it is here discussed because it fits in naturally with the St. Louis convention. During the early part of December, 1890, the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, with two other organizations, met in its first annual convention at Ocala, Marion county, Florida, Colonel L. L. Polk, presiding. A platform was brought forth here around which the political history of Alabama and the nation revolved for several succeeding years.⁴¹ "The Ocala Platform," or "Demands," like the St. Louis platform, contained eight planks, and the two platforms differed in no great respect, other than that the Ocala platform substituted government control for government ownership of railroads, telegraphs, and telephones and demanded tariff revision.⁴²

Some two hundred delegates from "everywhere" attended the convention,⁴³ which was in session a week. The distressing economic conditions of the farmer were discussed, the "Force Bill" denounced, and the Kansas delegates endeavored in vain to launch a third party movement. Southern delegates opposed a break with the old party. The radical "Ocala demands" virtually set the nation on fire during the next few years. They became the test of orthodox Democracy. Aspirants for office had to express their stand upon these demands. Nor indeed were Alliance members a unit on them, and local and state alliances spent the next year endorsing or rejecting the platform of the Florida convention.⁴⁴

The Alabama State Alliance in annual session at Brundidge endorsed, with one lone dissenting vote, the Ocala platform⁴⁵ and most of the county alliances took similar action. However, the demands caused a rift in some of the locals. As some put it, the Ocala platform had captured the Alliance and had next gone out to bag the Democratic party. Nearly all Democrats, as W. C. Oates, J. T. Morgan, *et al* ripped to pieces the subtreasury

⁴¹ McVey, *Populist Movement*, p. 137; Muzzey, *United States*, 11, p. 232; Arnett, *op. cit.*, pp. 124 ff.

⁴² McVey, *Populist Movement*, pp. 137-138; DuBose, Article No. 97; *The Ocala Banner*, July 1, 1925. (Reprint); Personal letter from F. Harris, Editor, *The Ocala Banner*, June 20, 1925.

⁴³ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 24, 1890. Alabama's delegates to Ocala were S. M. Ransom, Opelika; J. S. Jackson, and C. F. Noe.

⁴⁴ *Birmingham News*, July 21, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 26, 1890; *Birmingham News*, Nov. 6, 1891; Arnett, *loc cit.*

⁴⁵ *Advertiser*, Aug. 12, 1891; *Advertiser*, Aug. 15, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 1, 1891.

plan and the plan⁴⁶ for government control or ownership of public utilities. One of the ablest and sanest discussions of the Ocala platform appeared seriatim in the *Montgomery Advertiser* from the pen of Honorable J. W. Stone, Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court. His exposition was made at the request of General E. W. Pettus, H. C. Tompkins and others. Judge Stone showed the impracticability of some of the "demands," but showed, contrary to newspaper propaganda, that many of them were no nightmares to go crazy over, but were just what many of the foremost Democrats of the United States had always advocated. Just here, in order to show the dynamics of political opinion in a third of a century, it is interesting to quote from Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi. No doubt Mr. Williams was in 1890 opposed to the Ocala platform, but in 1923 he said: "The old Ocala platform which the Populist party adopted thirty years ago was an angel of light in comparison with the *Norris Bill* "for establishing the Farmers' and Consumers' Financing Corporation.

THE EXCITING CAMPAIGN OF 1890.

In the South there was a strong tendency for the new party to work within the old party lines, while in the West it worked mainly outside the older parties and especially against the Republicans.⁴⁷ In Alabama the Alliance, now a political movement, waged its battle of 1890 within the Democratic ranks, but the Democrats split two years later and the independent faction, the "Popocrats," still professing to be Democrats, fought out the campaigns of 1892, 1894, and 1896 under the name of "Jeffersonian Democrats." This was distinctly a Populist movement and they were Populists, though not the officially organized Populist party, the latter being organized and led by "the boy orator," Joel C. Manning.⁴⁸ The preliminaries to the state convention and campaign of

⁴⁶ Which seems not to have been discarded, as McVey says. *Populist Movement*, pp. 138, 142. See also Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, p. 124.

⁴⁷ Appleton, *Annual Cyclopedic*, 1890, p. 300; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 170; Haynes *Third Parties*, *passim*; F. E. Haynes, "The New Sectionalism," in *Quart. Jr. Econ.*, X, p. 271, April, 1896.

⁴⁸ J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 294; see DuBose Article No. 106 in Jones, *Scrap Book*, 11, p. 20; *Advertiser*, April 11, 1892; *News*, April 15, 20, 1892. Two years later, the Populist party was for-

1890 were quite in contrast to those of previous years. Public excitement ran higher than at any time since 1874. January 1, 1890 found only two candidates announced for the governorship—Thomas Goode Jones and Reuben Franklin Kolb.⁴⁹ Jones was regarded as the *Advertiser's* candidate, the machine candidate—a Democrat “without prefix or suffix”; while Kolb as Commissioner of Agriculture was the candidate of the State Alliance—a body corporate whose members were oath bound, all white and virtually all Democrats.⁵⁰ Not all Alliancemen, however, were for Kolb, and not all Democrats were Alliance members.

In the early part of the year, three other candidates entered the gubernatorial race with much talk of a northern Alabamian for governor. These three men were Judge William Richardson of Huntsville, James Crook, of Anniston, former member of the State Railroad Commission, and Captain Joseph Forney Johnston, Birmingham banker, but formerly of Selma. Many thought the *Advertiser* would kill off Kolb by its attacks and Jones by its support, and the nomination would then go to some other candidate. There were intimations that with Kolb out of the way political harmony might be restored between white counties and the black belt by conceding the nomination to a candidate from the northern part of the state, “a farmer governor,” and thus quash all semblance of a third party.⁵¹

The press of the state was somewhat divided, Jones being perhaps the choice of a majority of the editors. The *Advertiser* was for him, though it refrained from calling his name for quite a while. It waged a daily attack upon Commissioner Kolb, charging that he had used the Alliance for personal, political aggrandizement, that he had not cleared, to the satisfaction of the people, the charge against him to the effect that he had ridden on free railroad passes and charged the same to the state. On Kolb's side soon entered the brilliant, yet erratic,

mally launched at Ashland, Clay county, April 10, 1892, by J. C. Manning.

⁴⁹ For sketches of Kolb and Jones, see Owen, *Dictionary of Alabama Biography* and Brant and Fuller *Memorial Record of Alabama*.

⁵⁰ DuBose, Articles Nos. 82 and 84; *Advertiser*, May 18, 1889 and Jan. 24, 1890. Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307.

⁵¹ *Advertiser*, Feb. 7, 1890; Brown, *Alabama*, pp. 306-7; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 293.

Frank Baltzell as editor of the *Alliance Herald* of Montgomery.⁵² Kolb was the only Alliance candidate, and as such the only one who could boldly advocate the Alliance propaganda.⁵³ He was busy with his institutes among the farmers, and from the outset "had so conducted the office as to rally the farmers around him." It early became evident that the only chance to beat Kolb was to put out favorite sons from several parts of the state to draw votes from him, and then to merge these forces.⁵⁴

The state convention was set by the executive committee for May 28, in Montgomery, and was to have 541 delegates.⁵⁵ For a clear understanding of the personnel of the convention, as well as the methods of election of delegates, especially since there was complaint against the convention system, it is necessary to trace somewhat in detail the beat and county elections. In the latter part of January, 1890, the counties began to select their quota of delegates to the state convention. Beat primaries in which county delegates were elected and county primaries or conventions which named delegates to the state convention was the usual method of procedure. Some counties followed the unit rule, others divided their delegation.⁵⁶

The first shot was fired by Blount, a rural, hill county in the north central section of the state. The convention instructed its delegates for Judge Richardson of Madison county.⁵⁷ This action was immediately denounced by Kolb who claimed Richardson's nomination impossible, and that Blount's action was tantamount to Kolb's support. Dallas, a black-belt county, followed next, with a primary, instructing a solid delegation for her former son, Captain J. F. Johnston. The Jefferson county primary went for Johnston, the county vote going largely for Kolb and the city vote for Johnston. The Calhoun convention instructed its delegates for James Crook, though the convention was said to be controlled

⁵² DuBose, Article No. 87 in Jones, V, p. 59; DuBose, Article No. 88, in Jones, V, p. 61; *Advertiser*, March 11, 1890.

⁵³ Miller, *Alabama*, p. 285; *Advertiser*, Jan. 24, 30, 1890.

⁵⁴ Jones, *Scrap Book*, 1, p. 56; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284; DuBose, Article No. 95, in Jones, V, p. 65.

⁵⁵ DuBose, Article No. 88, in Jones V, p. 61.

⁵⁶ *Age-Herald*, April 30, 1890.

⁵⁷ DuBose, Article No. 88.

by Alliancemen.⁵⁸ The last of April, Montgomery county held its convention, with mixed results, but after a hard battle it instructed for Colonel Jones. In May, Barbour, the home of Kolb, held a stormy convention, dominated by Alliance members, who instructed the county delegates for Captain Kolb. Thus five candidates had been launched.⁵⁹

One county after another held a primary or convention, electing delegates, some instructing, others not. Lowndes' convention, a ten to one black county, unanimously instructed its delegates to vote "first, last and all the time for Honorable R. F. Kolb for governor."⁶⁰ It was practically admitted by the *Alliance Herald* that the Kolb forces had captured the Lowndes convention by strategy—that "each primary had a ticket made out for the delegates, and each member was given one." Butler, Madison, Marengo, Pike and Geneva, "throttled by the Alliance" and Kolb's machine," instructed for Kolb.⁶¹ Selection of delegates continued until late in May. On May 25, three days before the state convention, the *Advertiser* announced that the county campaigns had closed and recorded the standing of the delegates thus:

| | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|
| Crook | 53 | Kolb | 215 |
| Jones | 50 | Richardson | 87 |
| Johnston | 100 | Uncertain | 14 |

Although this number was somewhat short of the total, it shows Captain Kolb had more delegates than any other two men.

Little active campaigning over the state had been done by any candidate other than the commissioner who, in the performance of his legal duties, was almost continually among the "dear people." In two circulars he urged the Alliance to support him, to go to the county and state conventions and aid him and the delegates selected for him "to defeat the plutocrats who, in unholy alliance, are against the people." None of the other candidates, except Jones ever took the stump.⁶² Immediately after the Montgomery county convention Jones made a few speeches, his first being at Dadeville, a "hotbed of the

⁵⁸ *Age-Herald*, May 2, 1890; DuBose, Articles Nos. 88, 89.

⁵⁹ *Advertiser*, May. 18, 1890; see *Advertiser*, April 20, 1890.

⁶⁰ *Age-Herald*, April 23, 1890; *Advertiser*, April 22, 24, 1890.

⁶¹ *Advertiser*, April 27, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 88; *Age-Herald*, May 21, 28, 1890; see Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307.

⁶² DuBose, Article No. 89, *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1911.

Alliance and a Kolb stronghold." Here he, as an able lawyer and hence ineligible to the Alliance, with whose original purposes he sympathized, put the issues before the people in a potent and pungent fashion. "I am," said he, "a candidate for your suffrage, but I would rather have your respect than your votes." By his enemies, Mr. Jones was accused of being a railroad lawyer, something no office seeker desires to be accused of.⁶³ He did have one railroad as a client, but he had, in opposition to the advice of some of his railroad friends, urged the establishment of a railroad commission. He saw no objection to the farmers organizing, as other crafts had organized. He said the farmers had demanded railroad commissions, both state and interstate, and got them; a ten-hour work day, and got it; a crop lien law and got it; stock laws (fence laws) and got them; and also a reduced tax rate. He opposed the sub-treasury scheme of the Alliance as embodied in the two bills then before Congress, their plans being impracticable, and the results would be more direct than the Black Friday of 1869. He believed the money situation, i.e., money scarcity and the high rate of interest, could be remedied by free coinage and tariff revision, and that time and patience would correct the other economic ills.

As the state convention drew nearer, excitement became intense among the people as among the press. One writer said⁶⁴ such excitement had not been witnessed in Montgomery since the Secession Convention of January, 1861. Upon the results of this convention would hang the fate of Alabama for years to come. Betting on the results ran high, usually favoring Kolb's nomination on the third or fourth ballot. The *Alliance Herald*, although almost on financial rocks, fought boldly for Kolb and the Alliance. May 15, Baltzell, the editor, as Kolb's circulars had done, urged the Alliance delegates to arrive in Montgomery a day before the convention, stating that he would have the convention work "laid out and pushed through without unnecessary delay."⁶⁵

⁶³ *Ibid.*; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 294. For a virulent controversy between Ex-Governor B. B. Comer and Judge Jones over the question of railroad favoritism, see *Advertiser* for June 11 and Sept. 17, 1911; see also pamphlet by Judge Jones, Montgomery, Nov. 28, 1913.

⁶⁴ DuBose, Article No. 89, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 62.

⁶⁵ DuBose, Article No. 91, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 63; *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890.

Before describing the convention proceedings, especially since the State Democratic Convention was, by some referred to as "the crime of 1890", it is appropriate to refer briefly to some of its antecedents. For seventy years Alabama had used exclusively, and with fair satisfaction, the convention method of nominating party candidates, and the convention of 1890 was a regularly called convention, notwithstanding it gave decided impetus to the demand for primaries rather than conventions.⁶⁶ County delegates were chosen in the customary fashion either by primary or convention, usually the latter, and delegates were instructed or not as the county convention decided.

The question of representation, i.e., the method of apportionment⁶⁷ was of grave importance, the custom being to apportion on the basis of the Democratic vote for governor at the last election. A prospective candidate could usually forecast his chances in advance of the convention. The apportionment was made by the Democratic State Executive Committee and for 1890 it was based on Seay's vote in 1888 (each county having one delegate for a given number of votes cast in the general election for governor in August, 1888. As it was revealed Seay⁶⁸ in 1888 had received his largest vote from the black-belt counties which had a small white population. Kolb was typically, though from Barbour, the white-county candidate, although Blount, a white county, had recommended Richardson, and Calhoun Crook. However, Kolb as the Alliance candidate was the impersonation of the white votes, for the Alliance members were white and with few exceptions in white counties Alliance members were Democrats.

As DuBose says,⁶⁹ Dallas county had 9,285 white population and 45,372 negroes, Cherokee, 18,080 whites and only 3,618 blacks, yet Dallas in 1888 had cast 9,084 votes for Seay, almost equal to its *total population*, black and white, of all ages,⁷⁰ while Cherokee's vote was only

⁶⁶ DuBose, Article No. 90, in Jones V, p. 62.

⁶⁷ DuBose Article No. 90, in Jones, V, p. 62. There is an almost unlimited list of references on this topic.

⁶⁸ DuBose, Article No. 90, in Jones, V, p. 62. *Eleventh Census*, pt. 111, p. 672.

⁶⁹ Governor Thomas Seay lived at Greensboro, Hale county, a black belt county.

⁷⁰ It was not exceptional for the number of votes cast to exceed the number of potential voters; see Brown, *Lower South*, pp. 250 ff.

2,972. Dallas sent 30 delegates and Cherokee 10 to the 1890 convention and all of the Dallas delegates were white men, each representing one-fifth white and four-fifths colored population, whereas the white delegates of Cherokee were all white, each representing five-sixths white and one-sixth negro population and there was not a delegate in the convention who was not pledged to white supremacy for Alabama candidates, especially in the black belt, were peculiar, and the whites who owned the property, paid taxes, built the churches and schools, promoted trade and commerce, thought they were entitled to a large share in the government. Good government in Alabama, they contended, necessitated the governing of the negroes of the black belt by the whites of those counties and the state and the dominant party's machinery had these things to keep in mind.

The city of Montgomery was full of delegates, candidates and Alliancemen several days before the convention assembled.⁷¹ The old Exchange Hotel was headquarters for four of the gubernatorial aspirants, while Kolb's headquarters were at the Alliance Exchange on Tallapoosa Street.⁷² The candidates were as busy as bees mixing, mingling, checking their prospects. The situation was "intense" with Kolb admittedly in the lead. His friends said he could not be beaten and it was clear to all that a break must come in the ranks of the other four candidates if Kolb was to be defeated.⁷³ Train loads of friends of the different candidates with their leaders were arriving from the several counties. Crook, who, according to his friends, failed to arrive Sunday, not wishing to travel on Sunday, came in Monday "buoyant and breezy." Richardson's friends were reported as most conspicuous in the lobbies and he, fit and able, with the eighth district solidly behind him, was described as the most contented looking candidate, with his shirt front "unusually expansive."⁷⁴ Johnston had made friends with all the redheaded men! Jones, being regarded as the tail-ender, was "beloved by his Montgomery constituents," while Kolb, unlike, his opponents—the money, champagne and wine crowd who lived in

⁷¹ *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 90, in Jones V, p. 63.

⁷² DuBose, Article No. 89, in Jones, V, p. 62; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307.

⁷³ *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1890.

⁷⁴ *Advertiser*, June 25, 1892.

luxury at the Exchange Hotel at \$3.50 a day—was busy with his poor “wool-hat boys” at the Alliance Warehouse,⁷⁵ formulating plans to defeat the “Silk-Hat Bosses”! Kolb’s was characterized as the most perfect organization ever seen in Alabama except that of Thomas Seay in 1886. All felt that Kolb was the man to beat, but each was in to win for himself and no one as yet wished to sacrifice himself in order to defeat Kolb.⁷⁶ As one writer⁷⁷ put it, for about one-fifth of the convention, the real issue was, “Can we beat Kolb?”; and for the other four-fifths, “Can we nominate our man?” It was believed that the delegates would prefer to go home without any nomination rather than put in a dark horse. The State Executive Committee had met in Montgomery just before the convention assembled. This committee was anti-Kolb and “the machinery” was “to that extent against the leading candidate.”⁷⁸

THE GREAT CONVENTION OF 1890.

The momentous occasion had arrived and “The Great Convention” was called to order by Attorney Henry Clay Tompkins of Montgomery, Chairman of the Democratic State Executive Committee. Silence prevailed as the roll of the convention of 541 delegates was called in the famous hall of the House of Representatives where Yancey had often spoken and where Houston and others had taken the oath of office as governor.⁷⁹

The chairman had the right to name the temporary chairman of the convention, a very delicate and important task in view of the tense situation and of the divided feeling with Alliance and non-Alliance delegates present. As a matter of fact, a preliminary caucus was held in accordance with plans of friends of the four candidates and they had agreed on the name for temporary chairman. This convention was a novelty with the farmers occupying the seats and the politicians in the lobby. Two-thirds of the convention delegates were farmers, representing a rural commonwealth, a scene never before observed in Alabama but the fact that the convention was

⁷⁵ *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1890.

⁷⁶ DuBose, Article No. 95, in *Jones Scrap Book*, V, p. 65.

⁷⁷ *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1890; *Advertiser*, May 28, 1890.

⁷⁸ *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1890; *Advertiser*, May 28, 1890.

⁷⁹ DuBose, Article No. 91, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890. *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1890.

composed of a majority of farmer delegates, mostly new men, inexperienced in political battles, did not signify that the convention proceedings were to be dominated and manipulated by the agrarian element. The executive committee was anti-Kolb and Alabama's public men were generally outspoken against the Alliance plans, especially the subtreasury plan.⁸⁰

In calling the convention to order at noon, May 28, Chairman Tompkins spoke briefly but emphatically, saying among other things:¹⁸ "Let this convention remember that its members are representatives of the great Democratic party of this state and of the Union. . . . The building up of one class at the expense of other classes of citizens in a free country cannot fail to introduce the Iliad of all our woes." Tompkins then named, casually, for temporary chairman, William H. Denson of Gadsden, who in a brief but forceful speech denounced all attempts at division, schism and class hatred and warned the party to stand united for white supremacy. Although it was not here stated, it was well known that the Republicans in Alabama were strong for the St. Louis platform which drove a wedge between the Alliance and the staunch Democratic party of Alabama,⁸² especially on the race question. After Mr. Denson had named a credentials committee of sixteen members, two from each Congressional district, with E. L. Russell of Mobile, a Johnston delegate as chairman—six of the entire committee being Kolb delegates—the convention adjourned its first day's session.⁸³

On Thursday, May 29, after receiving a report from

⁸⁰ DuBose, Article No. 91, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; *Advertiser*, May 30, 1890.

Tompkins himself was a lawyer and not an Allianceman. Senator Pugh in Washington, bitter against the subtreasury, wrote a strong letter to influence the convention. Congressman Herbert, of the second district, opposed the subtreasury schemes and the Alliance, as did Congressman Oates of the third district. In fact, Alabama's entire representation in both houses of Congress was opposed to the Alliance's political scheme and against Kolb the Alliance candidate.

⁸¹ Denson was a legislator, a lawyer, U. S. District Attorney during Cleveland's first administration, later member of Congress, a man of force, and a good speaker, with a fine knowledge of parliamentary law.

⁸² DuBose, Article No. 92, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 63.

⁸³ DuBose, Article No. 91, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1913.

The city was agog that hot summer night. Kolb's forces held an outdoor meeting with much speaking.

the credentials committee as to the disposal of contested delegates from the counties of Lee, Shelby and Chilton, nominations were declared in order.⁸⁴ Captain Johnston of Jefferson was nominated by E. L. Russell of Mobile; Colonel Thomas G. Jones of Montgomery by his law partner, J. M. Faulkner of Montgomery; Captain R. F. Kolb of Barbour by G. L. Comer of Barbour; James Crook of Calhoun by W. H. Denson of Etowah, with John B. Knox in the chair; and Judge William Richardson of Madison by Samuel Blackwell of Morgan. All five candidates were middle aged and vigorous, had seen service in the Confederate Army, and had helped to "redeem" Alabama.⁸⁵ On the first⁸⁶ ballot Thursday, as the sun sank beneath the beautiful horizon beyond the winding Alabama river, the result stood: Kolb, 235; Johnston, 104; Richardson, 88; Crook, 52; Jones, 45. This was one more ballot for Kolb than he and his supporters had claimed⁸⁷ on the first ballot in their secret caucus May 27. After two more ballots, with little change, Kolb lacking only a few having the necessary majority, the convention adjourned over night—a night of politics, with much betting on the outcome and with many group meetings.

Just here it may be of interest to see the result of a few counties on the first ballot Thursday. In twelve black-belt counties—Macon, Lee, Montgomery, Barbour, Bullock, Lowndes, Wilcox, Autauga, Dallas, Marengo, Sumter, Perry, with an aggregate vote of 188 delegates—72 of these went for Kolb and 116 divided among the others. Thus in these twelve black-belt counties where white planters dominated public opinion, yet where the bulk of the negroes lived, Kolb received in this convention of white delegates from 66 counties almost one-third of his strength.

On Friday the third day of the convention balloting continued all day, Kolb's forces holding tight and strong, and Friday's work closed at 9:30 P. M. with the 38th ballot and no choice, Kolb's vote having risen only from

⁸⁴ DuBose, Article No. 92, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; *Advertiser*, May 2, 1890.

⁸⁵ *Advertiser*, May 29, 1890. Indeed, it was said that no man was independent enough to run for an office without a Confederate record.

⁸⁶ *Advertiser*, May 28, 29, 1890.

⁸⁷ DuBose, Article No. 94, in *Age-Herald*, May 28, 1913; *Advertiser*, May 29, 30, 1890.

235 to 241; Johnston had gained 12, making 116; and Jones was back to his original 45. Thus the third day of the convention passed without any definitive action.⁸⁸ Hundreds of farmers by Kolb's urge were present, hotel bills had gone to the bottom of their pockets, and their railroad tickets had expired, so the convention voted to explain the situation to the railroads and to request an extended time limit.

Meanwhile the committee on resolutions with the eloquent Attorney E. T. Taliaferro of Birmingham as chairman, had made its report, the platform re-affirming an "unswerving and unalterable fealty and allegiance to the time-honored principles of the Democratic party as promulgated by Jefferson, defended by Jackson, and maintained by Grover Cleveland."⁸⁹ It declared for Jeffersonian state rights opposing Federal interference in elections, state control of public schools, laws for the regulation of monopolies, tariff reform and for revenue only, equal protection of the races, endorsed Seay's administration and pledged loyalty to support the nominees.

Realizing firmly that the four anti-Kolb candidates must concentrate their forces to win over Kolb's airtight organization of the farmers, a committee of four—a friend of each candidate—was selected to try to reach a compromise. Captain Johnston, second in the race, with eagle eye as to the strength of each candidate, is said to have suggested the expedient of a compromise to beat Kolb and manipulated the plan.⁹⁰ The secret conference took place in the Exchange Hotel. The committee consisted of J. J. Willett, representing Crook; J. M.

⁸⁸ DuBose, Article No. 93, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; *Advertiser*, May 30, 31, 1890. See accounts of 1890 convention and election, in works by Owen, and Smith and De Land, cited *supra*.

Amid the serious business there was much fun, on the part of the weary delegates. A Bibb county delegate proposed, as a way out of the dilemma, that on each vote the lowest candidate drop out, till a man was named! A Lowndes delegate urged that Barbour county be annexed to Georgia since the convention was unable to silence Kolb and Barbour county. Dallas' 30 and Jefferson's 25 stood ever firmly for Johnston; while Lamar "in despair" cast hers for W. H. Denson, who, as chairman announced it as "scattering" amid laughter.

⁸⁹ DuBose, Article No. 93, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890. President Cleveland wrote a personal letter of appreciation to Taliaferro for this beautiful sentiment.

⁹⁰ DuBose, Article No. 94, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307. See Judge Jones' Article in *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1911.

Faulkner for Jones; George Jones of Florence for Richardson; and Rufus N. Rhodes for Johnston.⁹¹ This committee or caucus met at 11 P. M. Friday, and continued in session till 7 A. M., Saturday—struggling over the one and only great question, namely, which of the four candidates “could command the largest number of votes that were being cast for all of them,” that is, which would lose the fewest votes if the four were pitted against Kolb. Despite the strength claimed for Richardson and Crook, estimates showed that Jones, if taken down would lose most to the Kolb forces, (i.e., give more votes to Kolb) and command more nearly the full strength of the field than any one else.⁹² Early in the deliberations the contest is said to have narrowed down to Crook and Jones. Johnston, Crook and Richardson could each deliver his delegates to any other man, as a choice, but Jones could not, for they would go to Kolb who would therefore, be the nominee if Jones retired. For this reason Johnston, leading candidate of the four, thought it safest to settle on Jones, the weakest candidate. He was the only man who “Could win out in a standup and straight ballot against Captain Kolb.” His weakness was his strength, just as Johnston’s strength was his weakness, for although next to Kolb in delegates, he could deliver all of them to another candidate. The Montgomery delegates closely divided between Kolb and Jones, but pledged as a unit to Jones, decided⁹³ the governorship for 1890.

The convention hall was packed on Saturday, May 31, the fourth and last day. Rumors had spread as to the possible action. The Kolb men, ever expecting a trick, were angry.⁹⁴ The plan was to start the first ballot with all the candidates in the field, but with their friends all voting for Jones. As the roll call was ordered, Autauga—which had been voting two for Kolb, one for Johnston, and one for Crook—now led in the “break” by going two for Kolb and two for Jones. “That settled the

⁹¹ DuBose, Article No. 94, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1913, says Frank Boykin represented Johnston.

⁹² DuBose, Article No. 94, in *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1913; T. G. Jones, in *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1911; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307.

⁹³ Jones, *Scrap Book*, 1, p. 56; *Advertiser*, June 11, 1911; *Advertiser*, Jan. 20, 1894. Jones was at home asleep and knew nothing of his being the man to battle against the farmers’ candidate until Saturday morning.

⁹⁴ *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 94, in Jones, V, p. 64.

issue, and the vast throng in the lobby and the galleries heaved a sigh of relief" and waited for the next county and the next, each county altering its votes much upon the foregoing plan. Friends withdrew the names of the three "shelved" candidates.⁹⁵ All counties having voted and contested cases settled, the vote stood 277 for Jones and 245 for Kolb, a majority of 32 for Jones. Kolb had gained only 10 votes over his first ballot, while Jones had gained 232.⁹⁶ A careful analysis of the county votes shows that Jones was the only candidate who could have won against Kolb.

The ballot was never announced, for before the clerks could foot up the vote, Henry D. Clayton, Kolb's leader, withdrew the latter's name rather than endanger the party, moved that the nomination of Jones be made unanimous, and made an impressive speech.⁹⁷ Mr. Jones being escorted to the stage made a speech with much feeling and closed by saying Democrats must stand together, for Democracy meant home rule, caucasian supremacy, and prosperity for Alabama. Then Captain Kolb followed with a ringing speech in which he *pledged his loyal support to the nominee, and agreed to stump the state for Jones*. The other candidates for governor in similar vein participated in the love feast.

Thus ended the fiercest convention struggle ever staged in Alabama. With the nomination for governor over, the convention adjourned for outside festivities till the afternoon when the other candidates were named. Staid old Montgomery went wild over Jones'⁹⁸ nomination to this \$3000 office.

⁹⁵ DuBose, Article No. 94, in Jones, V, p. 64.

⁹⁶ *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 94, in Jones, p. 64, *Advertiser*, Oct. 17, 1891; *Advertiser*, June 1, 1890. See T. G. Jones, *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1911.

⁹⁷ *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; *Advertiser*, June 3, 1890; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307. Jones received over a thousand telegrams from all parts of the U. S. congratulating him and the Democratic party. The *Alliance Herald* charged Kolb's defeat to a conspiracy of the non-Alliance candidates.

⁹⁸ *Age-Herald*, June 4, 1890; *Advertiser*, June 1, 1890; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 284; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307; *Advertiser*, June 1, 1890.

It was an easy matter to dispose of the "lesser nominees." The Kolb alignment was evident throughout the convention. All incumbent officials were renominated except for Superintendent of Education. Solomon Palmer of Marshall had already served three terms and since some Democrats believed in rotation, the convention nominated Major J. G. Harris, by 291 to 234. Other officers

Regardless of hidden feelings and future developments, harmony and good will seemed to prevail as the convention closed. Each candidate had put up a good fight; none had cause to blush for his record. One reporter expressed the condition thus: "A brave and gallant contest of one man against stupendous odds, and when at last he fell, it was with the white banner of Democracy floating above him. The bitterness is gone, and the 'wool hat boys' who sat like one man and voted for the man they loved, with the same unit rule have raised the banner of Jones and will follow that spotless ensign to the polls in August."⁹⁹

The Georgia *Alliance Farmer*,¹⁰⁰ commenting editorially on the Alabama election said Kolb was defeated after carrying into the convention a vote only a little short of the majority, and attributed his defeat to (1) the lack of competent leadership; (2) opposition of politicians, bankers and monopolies, not only in Alabama, but throughout the nation; (3) the false, scandalous reports circulated against Kolb.

ORGANIZED DEMOCRACY VICTORIOUS.

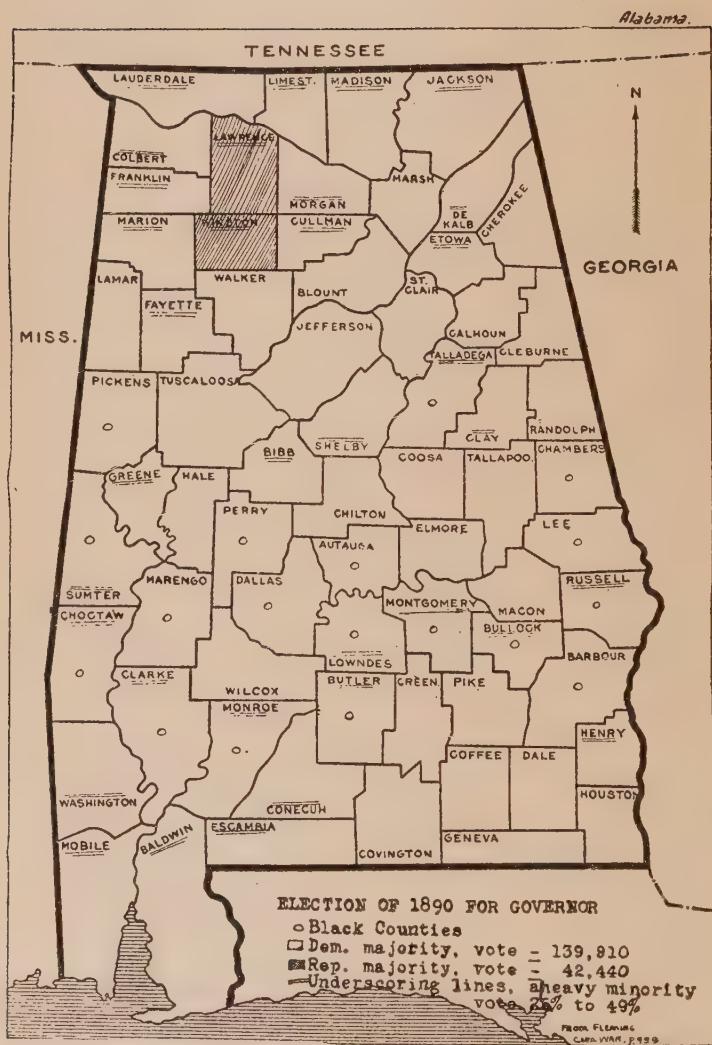
The battle was, in one sense, only half won when the state convention had acted for the general election came in August. The convention contest had been unusually interesting since it was a contest within the party ranks. Although the "regularity" Democrats had finally dominated the convention and nominated their man, the Democratic party must now measure swords with other

named were: J. D. Barron, Secretary of State; C. D. Hogue, Auditor; J. L. Combs, Treasurer; W. L. Martin, Attorney-General.

⁹⁹ *Age-Herald*, June 4, and Nov. 26, 1890. The editor of the *Independent* (N. Y. June 5, 1890) said: "In Alabama the Farmers' candidate has just been defeated in the Democratic State Convention, and by the exercise of much strategy. He may run as an independent candidate; and as the Alliance is nearly 100,000 strong, there's not a little danger of the breaking up of the solid white vote."

¹⁰⁰ *Advertiser*, June 6, 1890.

The *Advertiser* denied these as causes for Kolb's defeat, that not all politicians, bankers and "interests" were against Kolb; that Kolb was one of the best organizers in the state, and had shrewd and capable helpers. DuBose, attributed his defeat to the St. Louis platform and its aftermath, including the visiting "Emisaries." In his opinion the actual vote of 277 for Jones and 245 for Kolb did not represent the relative strength of the two factions nor of the candidates. (*Age-Herald*, April 14, 1913.)



parties for supremacy. Since 1874 nomination by the Democratic convention had been tantamount to election of the party's choice, but what would be the result in 1890?

According to plans of the State Executive Committee, Eufaula was designated as the place for the opening speech of the campaign. Selection of Eufaula was intended as a politic stroke, for it was the home of Kolb and many of his strong supporters.¹⁰¹ The committee wished to honor Kolb and appease his home town as well as "the State of Barbour." In order to restore or maintain party unity the committee wished also to avail itself of Kolb's proffered services. But as many who knew Kolb best—who knew his "indomitable will" and "resourcefulness"—had predicted, the results of using him as a speaker for the Democratic party were most unfortunate. In his speech at Eufaula he threw a bomb into the supposedly placid waters by stating that he had been "stolen out" of the nomination at the recent convention. From then on he became more rabid in his charges of "fraud" by the convention. Kolb never spoke again with the Democratic nominee. Much of his speech was expunged from the reports to the press. The huge throng present, many of them Alliancemen, were dumbfounded at his speech and there were few who did not think he would try to seek redress at the election two years later. Henceforth¹⁰² Kolb fought the Democratic "machine" and was in fact a "bolter," a Populist.

Several dormant elements seemed to have been aroused.¹⁰³ The Republicans with Ben M. Long of Walker as gubernatorial candidate once again challenged the Democrats for a joint canvass. The handful of Prohibitionists had put out a state ticket,¹⁰⁴ and after a second attempt the Greenbackers had also named a state ticket, a kind of side show.

In an election displaying considerable apathy the Democrats won easily, August 4. Jones received 139,212 votes as against Long's vote of 42,390—more than three

¹⁰¹ *Age-Herald*, July 23, 1890; *Advertiser*, July 9, 1890. See T. G. Jones, in *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1911.

¹⁰² DuBose, Article No. 95, Jones, V, p. 66; *Age-Herald*, June 9, 23, 1890; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 295; Arnett, *The Populist Movement in Georgia*, p. 123; *News*, Dec. 21, 1891 and Jan. 28, 1892.

¹⁰³ *Age-Herald*, July 9, 30, 1890; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 285; *Advertiser*, May 16, 17, 1890.

¹⁰⁴ *Age-Herald*, July 9, 1890; Owen, *Alabama*, I, p. 571.

to one.¹⁰⁵ J. C. Coulson, "nondescript" candidate, received 1385. The Alliance forces were naturally disappointed at the defeat of Kolb in the May convention, however they supported the Democratic nominees in August rather than vote for the Republicans.

A strong legislature was elected, a majority of them being Alliancemen and Kolb supporters.¹⁰⁶ Likewise the election of Nov. 5 resulted in a Democratic victory.¹⁰⁷

The general assembly convened¹⁰⁸ in its biennial session, Nov. 11, 1890. The house had 100 members, three of these being Republicans and one Independent, the others being Democrats, with Alliancemen, who might now technically be called Populists, in the majority. The legislature of 1890-91 is often called the Alliance Legislature.¹⁰⁹ The senate had 33 members, all Democrats. Only a part of the senators were elected in 1890 as others held over. Some of the outstanding Alliance members of the lower house were Newton N. Clements, of Tuscaloosa, elected speaker. He was a good speaker and an able parliamentarian. It was perhaps a loss to the state when he was made speaker, as he might have been more useful on the floor as "the Gentleman from Tuscaloosa." Henry D. Clayton, lawyer, Kolb floor leader in the state convention, was a member of the house, as was S. M. Adams, long president of the Alliance. Reverend Mr. Adams was an "Allianceman in an Alliance House." Another Allianceman who rendered notable service was Professor John H. Davis of Fayette. With the possible exception of Willis Brewer, Davis was the first man "in

¹⁰⁵ *Age-Herald*, August 6, 1890; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 285; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 307. *Age-Herald*, Nov. 19, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 95, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 66. See Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 799.

¹⁰⁶ *Age-Herald*, Nov. 16, 1890; *Advertiser*, Aug. 16, 1890; *Age-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1891.

¹⁰⁷ J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 362; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 5, 19, 1890, and Oct. 29, 1890; *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1890; *Advertiser*, Sept. 24, 1890.

These men were elected to the 52nd Congress (1891-93): (1) Richard H. Clarke (2) H. A. Herbert (3) W. C. Oates (4) Louis Turpin (5) James E. Cobb (6) John H. Bankhead (7) W. H. Forney (8) Joe Wheeler. The only change was in the election of Turpin over J. McDuffie (Republican) who had unseated Turpin in 1889.

¹⁰⁸ *Advertiser*, Nov. 11, 1890. Two from Lawrence and one from Winston.

¹⁰⁹ *Advertiser*, August 16, 1890; *Age-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1891 and Nov. 19, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 95, in Jones *Scrap Book*, V. p. 66.

classical lore" in the house. He was a fine speaker and was said to be usually on the right side of a question. He aided Commissioner Kolb frequently in his institutes and was really an ardent Populist.¹¹⁰ Meador of Marengo, thirty years old and handsome, was considered the most prominent of the younger Alliance members. Scott of Russell, familiar with literature, a good speaker, an Allianceman, was regarded as the most picturesque figure in the house. Like Brewer he was ever opposed to increased expenditures.¹¹¹ Beck of Mobile and Hector D. Lane of Madison were other prominent Alliance members.

Governor Thomas Seay, aspirant for the U. S. Senate, submitted a strong retiring message eulogizing the Democratic party for its achievements of the last sixteen years.¹¹² He urged a constitutional convention, fair elections, better schools, supported by local taxation, etc.

On Dec. 1, Governor Jones was inaugurated amid a gay throng. His first message showed his familiarity with the state's conditions.¹¹³ He stressed the financial aspect, the need of ballot box reform, advocating a rigid secret ballot. The state constitution was hide bound and causing much complaint, but he thought its many defects, due to the unforeseen development of the state, should be remedied now by amendment rather than a new document. He favored improvement in the educational and convict systems.¹¹⁴

With the lower house strongly Alliance, Governor Jones was firmly opposed and handicapped in his legislative program,¹¹⁵ but made a good record notwithstanding. One of the important questions before the legislature was that of redistricting the state. The senate pandering to politicians, was moved with difficulty, but finally it followed the overwhelming voice of the house of representatives and passed the act dividing the state into nine instead of eight districts. The famous fourth Alabama district, usually Republican, was gerrymandered into a lizard shape giving the Democrats predominate

¹¹⁰ *Age-Herald*, Feb. 25, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Aug. 9, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 19, 1890.

¹¹¹ *Age-Herald*, Feb. 25, 1895.

¹¹² *Advertiser*, Nov. 11, 1890; *Senate Journal*, 1890-91, p. 8 ff, DuBose, Article No. 95, in Jones V. p. 66.

¹¹³ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 3, 1890.

¹¹⁴ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 10, 1890.

¹¹⁵ *Age-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1891.

ance.¹¹⁶ A deaf and blind institute was established at Talladega, an extra judge was added to the state supreme court, much effort, without success, was made to call a constitutional convention, and many bills showing dissatisfaction with the work of the Railroad Commission were considered.¹¹⁷

One of the delicate duties of the legislature was to select a successor to U. S. Senator James L. Pugh, who desired to succeed himself. The outcome of the election might depend upon the strength of the Alliance. Pugh had by his outspokenness made many enemies during his ten years in the Senate. Many also thought him lazy and they desired a younger and more active man. Governor Seay, a young man, wanted it; so did Ex-Governor Thomas H. Watts, and Kolb had announced for Pugh's seat before Jones' inaugural. All over the state his cry of "fraud and robbery" had been heralded and some said let him go to Washington.¹¹⁸ The two houses held a joint caucus on the night of Nov. 18, 1890. In the senate were 11 Alliancesmen and in the house 69, a total of 80 out of a membership of 133. In a joint meeting with all Alliance members backing Kolb, the result would have been in his favor. But not so. On the first caucus ballot the vote stood 42 for Pugh, 42 for Kolb, 32 for Seay, and 11 for Watts. On the 29th ballot secrecy of the ballot was abolished. The vote wavered but the caucus dissolved without a choice. In a few days each house in its own chamber balloted again for a Senator and finally re-elected Pugh, who received the votes of several Alliancesmen, among whom, after Kolb and Watts had withdrawn, were S. M. Adams and N. N. Clements, speaker of the house. Watts' forces joined in for Pugh and he was elected by a handsome majority over Seay. Pugh praised the Alliance but begged it not to disrupt the white man's party.¹¹⁹ He, like the Alliance, stood for more and cheaper money and for tariff reform.

¹¹⁶ *Age-Herald*, Feb. 9, 11, 12, 1891; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 286.

¹¹⁷ *Advertiser*, May 20, 26, 1891; *Advertiser*, Oct. 3, 1890; *Advertiser*, Feb. 19, 1891; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 286. The railroads incurred hostility by objecting to the special tax for paying the support of the commission.

¹¹⁸ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 3, 1890; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 19, 1890; DuBose, Article No. 99, in Jones, V, p. 70.

¹¹⁹ DuBose, Article No. 99, in Jones, V, p. 70; *Age-Herald*, Dec. 3, 1890; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, pp. 305-352; *Age-Herald*, Oct. 1, 1890; *Advertiser*, Jan. 11, 1891; *Advertiser*, Jan. 19, 1891.

An ugly contest arose between the legislature and the governor over the disposition of the state's portion of the Hatch Fund for the Agricultural Experiment Stations. The \$15,000 had since 1887 been used by the station at Auburn, but the legislature of 1890 passed an act introduced by Senator J. H. Minge of Marengo county to apportion \$9,000 to the station at Auburn and \$2,000 each to the stations at Uniontown, Athens and Abbeville. Governor Jones believing the law out of harmony with the purpose of Congress in establishing this trust fund, and believing it unwise to dissipate the funds, vetoed the bill. He had been warned by Alabama's U. S. Senators that such action might cause Congress to withdraw the fund. Jones was hanged and burned in effigy at two places in the state.¹²⁰ At Athens his likeness was strung to a telegraph wire and burned, amid the jeers of the mob. Much excitement prevailed. The senate upon second thought met and by large majority ratified the governor's action.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Kolb had been burned in effigy at Greensboro in the 1890 campaign. (*Age-Herald*, Feb. 22, 1891.)

¹²¹ *Age-Herald*, Feb. 22, 1891; DuBose, Article No. 100 in Jones IV, p. 42; *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1911, *Advertiser*, March 1, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 100, in Jones, V, p. 70.

CHAPTER V

THE POPULIST PARTY EMERGES

A SPLIT DEMOCRACY, 1892-1896.

One of the local papers of the state,¹ almost a year before the election of August, 1892, prophesied exactly in these words: "Next year is going to be the all-firedest campaign that this country has ever witnessed. You fellows that can't stand the pressure had better have your baggage checked through to another clime." The *Hartselle Enquirer* rejoined: "Yes, brother, you had better see that your ticket bears the straight Democratic stamp."

The convention fight of 1890 was a hectic one but that of 1892 was to eclipse it in fierceness of personal and political attacks. For the first time since 1861 the majority party of the state really divided. This time it was not a question of state rights but a fight primarily on the part of Commissioner Kolb aided by the Alliance, with some non-Alliance men, against the more conservative forces—the so-called machine group—led by Governor Jones.² It was the campaign of 1892 that was completely to rend the Democratic party. Yet it will be observed that each faction professed to recognize and proclaim its fidelity to that party. Although there were two state conventions and two distinct tickets each professing to be Democratic, a majority of the Alliance group did not openly acknowledge its adherence to the Populist party. The disgruntled, bolting wing, led by Captain Kolb in 1892 and again in 1894, and by Captain Goodwyn in 1896, called themselves Jeffersonian Democrats, and not Populists. They were, however, by the conservative Democrats and their press branded as "Populites" and they did, in two national elections support the Populist ticket. It will be seen that a distinct People's party was organized³ in 1892 and led by J. C. Manning, but this faction never gained any worthwhile headway as a middle-of-the-road group. The two groups always voted together,

¹ See *News*, Oct. 19, 1891, quoting the *Marion Standard*.

² Brown, *Alabama*, p. 331; See *Age-Herald*, Nov. 26, 1890.

³ *News*, June 23, 1892. For a study of Populism in other states see R. C. Miller, "Background of Populism in Kansas", in *Miss. Valley Hist. Review*, March, 1925.

and there was no popular distinction between them. They were all Populists.

The campaign of 1892 had virtually opened the moment Kolb was defeated in the convention of 1890. Like a violent disease the virus grew more deadly from the moment of its inception and with a two-year momentum the vitriolic year of 1890 was to be scarcely a drop in the bucket compared to that of 1892,—an epochal year in American political annals. All national, state and county officers were to be voted for that year, the number of candidates in Alabama alone being estimated at as high as 6,000.⁴

Although dissatisfied at Kolb's advice, his followers voted for Jones in August, 1890, but from then on Kolb and his supporters waged a constant battle for the office he had lost in the convention of 1890. This convention had appointed⁵ an Executive Committee of 22 persons, —15 Jones and 7 Kolb supporters, with H. C. Tompkins, a Jones man, as chairman. Thus from the outset there existed "A Discontented State Committee" which by precedent would have much to do with the next election, for it was the function of this committee to formulate in an extra legal way rules and policies for the county primaries and conventions.

The year 1891 was one of unrest in Alabama as elsewhere, industry being at low ebb, with much noise over the concentration of wealth by the few at the expense of the masses. Conditions seemed to grow worse year by year, and the soil was well prepared for a political bombshell. In Jefferson county, for example, much dissatisfaction existed among a large wage class and there early in 1891 Kolb supporters, led by Altman and Taliaferro, lawyers, organized the county committee. A young lawyer,⁶ Thomas M. Owen, later conspicuous in state history, who was at the time chairman of the Jefferson county Executive Committee, called a meeting in August 1891 which agreed to elect twenty-six delegates to the state convention, on the prorated plan, and not as a unit for either Kolb or Jones. The number of delegates allotted to each would thus depend upon the comparative popular support each received in the county primary. The pro-

⁴*Age-Herald*, April 26 1891. This estimate included an average of three candidates for each office from Congressman down through beat delegates.

⁵ DuBose, Article No. 104, in *Age-Herald*, Nov. 9, 1913.

⁶ DuBose, Article No. 104, in *Age-Herald*, Nov. 9, 1913.

rate plan agreed upon for Jefferson county and used in some of the other counties was viewed with much disfavor by many of the old-line Democrats,⁷ who urged uniformity of rules. There was rising a strong demand for primary elections rather than conventions where only the political boss and wire puller dominated. The *Montgomery Journal*⁸ opposed the change to a primary and was dubbed "The Billious Blue Bourbon." The Alliance as an organization did not advocate the primary election,⁹ although the Kolb faction generally charged that by fraud and trickery they had been counted out at the last convention but would not allow such to happen again.¹⁰

Jones was given no time or chance to show that his administration merited his re-election, for Kolb and his backers, strongly urged on by a majority of the Alliancemen, crying fraud and robbery, were determined that Kolb should be made governor in 1892. Plans were definitely launched immediately after the convention of 1890 to make Jones' re-nomination impossible.¹¹ In spite of the claim that both candidates belonged to the same political party; and in spite of the well established two-term precedent which in itself should have allowed Jones a second term without opposition, Kolb, instead of waiting till 1894, when he might have been invincible as a candidate, announced himself, July 21, 1891, as a candidate on the Democratic ticket, his only excuse being that he had been cheated out of the nomination in 1890.¹² From the start Kolb entered the campaign on the offensive, displaying himself as a martyr and a victim of the organized machine. His opponents said he assiduously preyed upon the sympathy and prejudices of the agricultural masses.¹³ Despite every variety of scheme to de-

⁷*News*, Nov. 3, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 29, 1891.

⁸*Age-Herald*, June 6, 18, 1891; *Age-Herald*, July 11, 1891; *News*, July 22, 1891.

⁹*News*, June 21, 1891.

¹⁰*Age-Herald*, June 5, 1891; *Age-Herald*, July 11, 1891; *News*, Dec. 14, 1891, July 22, 1891. One reason suggested by the Democrats as to why the Alliance party did not come out boldly for the primary plan was that their support was chiefly rural, and the small rural beat under the convention plan was allowed the same vote as the larger city beat, hence relatively the convention plan would give the Alliance faction greater strength.

¹¹*Advertiser*, May 10, 1892; *Birmingham News*, Sept. 20, 1891; *Advertiser*, July 2, 1891; *News*, Nov. 17, 1891.

¹²*News*, Oct. 27, 1891; *Advertiser*, July 29, 1891; *News*, Jan. 5, 1892, also Dec. 8, 1891, Nov. 15, 1891.

¹³*News*, Sept. 20, 1891; *Advertiser*, Jan. 20, 1891; See also

fame and injure Jones, the latter and his adherents were determined to fight the battle through. If Jones could not win over Kolb no one could.¹⁴ There was some talk¹⁵ of the Alliance running Congressman Joe Wheeler, who had recently joined the organization, instead of Kolb, but it was a mere rumor. Wheeler, a farmer and lawyer, affiliated with the Alliance in Lawrence county but opposed many of its schemes, as did Governor Jones who opposed the subtreasury, land loan and government ownership of railroads features and stood for Cleveland, "silver or no silver."¹⁶ Thus by mid-summer of 1891 the issues and candidates for the next election were known, namely, Jones *versus* Kolb. Jones was the incumbent and non-Alliance man asking re-election on the basis of Democratic precedent and a sane business administration, against Kolb professed farmer and leader of the Alliance basing his claim upon alleged fraud perpetrated against him a year before.¹⁷

The state press was also divided on the candidates, each of whom claimed the bulk of the papers. The Democratic papers claimed that Kolb could not count a half dozen Democratic papers supporting him, and not a dozen including the Alliance and third party papers. With the exception of the *Birmingham Age-Herald*, which at first was friendly to Kolb, they contended that the entire daily press of the state was for the "Democrats."¹⁸ By December, 1891, the *Age-Herald* was more favorable to Jones, and was said to be in the good company of the other big dailies and nine-tenths of the state's weeklies. The bulk

Advertiser, Aug. 31, 1890. The *Greensboro Watchman*, defending Jones and urging his re-election as honest, capable, and the undoubted choice of the Democratic majority, asked under what flag the opposition would fight. Would some Jacob don the raiment of Esau and in that manner seek the blessing of Isaac, and thus hope to prevent a time-honored custom of Democracy?

¹⁴*News*, for Sept. 18, 1891, Dec. 8, 1891; *Age-Herald* for July 16, 1891, Sept. 11, 1891, Oct. 9, 1891; *Advertiser*, Dec. 14, 1891.

¹⁵*Advertiser*, Dec. 14, 1891.

¹⁶*News*, Oct. 19, 1891, quoting *Louisville (Ky.) Times*.

¹⁷*Advertiser*, Aug. 8 and Oct. 13, 1891; *News*, March 25, 1892; Dec. 15, 1891. Jones' friends asked if this one so-called fraud of 1890 could be cured by another fraud, and stated that Kolb and his Alliance backers constituted the only machine they knew, the Alliance being the machine and Kolb the crank-turner. On the other hand the *Huntsville Mercury* called it a race between corporations and money powers against the candidate of the people,—the farmers' choice.

¹⁸*News*, Oct. 26 and Dec. 4, 1891; *Advertiser*, Jan. 19, 1892; *Age-Herald*, Oct. 2 and Nov. 11, 1891.

of Kolb's support,¹⁹ other than some locals, seems to have been the *Alliance Herald*, *Huntsville Mercury*, and *Opelika Industrial News*.

Commissioner Kolb had for over three years been constantly among the people in a public capacity whether ostensibly in the performance of his official duties, or really as a candidate for the highest office within the suffrage of the people. Jones, too, had been speaking at a few places but it was not till October 16, 1891, that he opened his second campaign in a long and able speech at Birmingham. In a speech straight from the shoulder he defended his administration, did not oppose the Alliance as such, recounted the history of the previous campaign, refuted and disproved all charges of corruption and theft on the part of the "machine," and said that if there was theft Kolb and his leaders were parties to it for they had made his nomination unanimous and had pledged their loyalty to the nominee and the party,²⁰ yet he was now stirring up civil strife over the entire state.

Complying with the suggestions of the State Executive Committee, the people, now becoming thoroughly aroused, began to form local clubs to back each of the candidates.²¹ Since Jefferson county was to hold its primary in December—the first in the campaign—both candidates centered

¹⁹*Advertiser*, Dec. 2, 1891. The *Advertiser*, *Mobile Register* and a few others urged that the time had come to draw a line and advised that the Alliancemen, if they wished to go into a third party, should do so, and be read out of the Democratic ranks.

²⁰*Age-Herald*, Oct. 17, 1891; *Advertiser*, July 23, 1891, Oct. 13, 1891; *News*, Oct. 17, 1891; Dec. 15, 1891.

The governor cited numerous trades on local candidates by the Kolb machine in the county conventions of 1890 and said Kolb's "much ado" over the delegates from the three contesting counties—led by Chilton, Lee and Shelby—was useless, for the results would have been the same had these counties gone for Kolb. Kolb had prophesied that the names of Lee, Shelby and Chilton would resound from every hill top and valley in Alabama before the next state convention, and like the battle cry of the Texans—"Remember the Alamo"—these names would become household words at every fireside! It was pointed out by Governor Jones that this was quite contrary to the heroes of the Alamo who fought not among themselves but against the foreign foe. Kolb who congratulated the Democrats and then cried traitor, was now charged with striving only to create class hatred, discord and disruption in the Democratic ranks. He was through his own political ambition wrecking a worthy organization by converting it into a political party. He was said to be neither a farmer nor a Democrat but a political "revolutionist," with a platform to suit each crowd.

(*News*, Oct. 25, 27 and Dec. 15, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Oct. 27, 1891; *Advertiser*, Oct. 27, 1891.)

their efforts early on that county. Jones spent a week in the county in November making speeches at five places, appealing particularly to the mining and factory groups who had been told that Kolb would befriend them and that Jones was opposed to the interests of the laboring masses and stood for the corporations—a plutocrat and friend of Wall Street because he had opposed some of the Ocala demands which he deemed harmful to the people.²² The governor explained his friendship and services in behalf of the laborer, and hoped that soon the convict system might be so changed as to eliminate the competition of free and convict labor.²³

Never before nor since in the state's history had there been injected into a campaign so many personal, muck-raking incidents. Rumors years since supposed to have been dead and buried were again resurrected, revitalized, exaggerated and circulated. Every personal and private as well as public act of the contestants was used for political capital, perhaps the bulk of the agitation being waged not by the candidates themselves, certainly not by the governor, but by their adherents. Governor Jones was accused of being a Republican because he, twenty-one years past, as a clerk of the State Supreme Court, a non-political job, had ridden in a carriage by request, through the streets of Montgomery with his employers, Judges Saffold and Peters, Republican Justices of the Supreme Court.²⁴ The event had no political significance whatever.

Kolb was accused of voting for a Republican twenty years past and one of the old charges ever rising like Banquo's ghost against Captain Kolb was the story of how he had tricked old man McRae out of several thousand dollars by selling him a mortgaged farm in the early 'seventies. There was also a Kolb-Guice cotton deal, which demonstrated how Kolb "raised cotton" in a pecu-

²¹*Age-Herald*, Oct. 25, 1891; *News*, Oct. 27, 1891; Nov. 19, 1891; *Advertiser*, July 28, 1891; *News*, July 22, 1891.

²²*News*, Nov. 14, 1891, Dec. 6, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1891. Nov. 11, 1891; *Advertiser*, Nov. 6, 1891, Aug. 22, 30, 1891.

²³*News*, Dec. 6, 1891; *Advertiser*, Nov. 22, 1891.

²⁴*Age-Herald*, Oct. 27, 1891; Nov. 20, 25, 1891; *News*, Dec. 4, 1891. After all, the week in Jefferson county was not so unsavory. A little spice was added in "Jones' smacking race" when he, complying with the request of Mr. Johns, had kissed Mrs. Johns after his Blue Creek speech. Nor was Kolb idle. Soon thereafter he, not to be out done, is alleged to have kissed a lady twice after his speech at Warrior! Whether this was by request of the husband was not recorded! (*Birginham News*, Nov. 20, 1891.)

liar way, to the detriment of Mr. Guice's purse.²⁵ Too, an old case wherein Kolb had been accused of defrauding a mechanic and evaded payment by pleading the statute of limitations was revived.²⁶ More recent accusations against Captain Kolb were to the effect that he ("Free Pass Reuben") had habitually used in violation of the constitution free passes while riding on trains (usually Pullmans, said his enemies) as commissioner of agriculture, yet had charged the state for his fare as well as for free lunches. Likewise he was charged with profiting by the sale of fertilizer tags for which he gave no satisfactory account. Political capital was made of all these charges. Upon request of the commissioner, Governor Jones had the state examiner of public accounts investigate Kolb's record. A shortage of only \$43.73 was found on the "free pass score," it being believed by some, however, that many records of free passes had been destroyed.²⁷

Be the charges true or false, Kolb's friends denied the accusations or dismissed them as mere indiscretions, and rallied to his support. One immediate result of the investigation was the passage of a law providing that the commissioner be elected instead of appointed by the governor.²⁸ Governor Jones appointed Hector D. Lane as Mr. Kolb's successor. The latter, claiming that his term did not expire till his successor was elected August 1, 1892, refused to give up his office and was at first sustained by the courts, but later the State Supreme Court

²⁵*Advertiser*, Feb. 26, 1892; *Birmingham News*, March 16, 19, 26, 1892; Dec. 22, 1891.

²⁶*News*, Nov. 27, 1891; 58 *Alabama Supreme Court Report*, pp. 529, 645.

²⁷*Age-Herald*, May 5, 6, 1891; Nov. 11, 1891; *Brown Alabama*, p. 311. Certain other small errors in the Agricultural and Mechanical College account and in business sales and land registries were discovered. No record was found as to how some 5090 fertilizer tags had been disposed of, however, the law allowed the commissioner to destroy them. But his enemies contended that it was the principle and not the actual amount that was of vital concern. Said one of the Mobile dailies: "Visions of free passes, 75 cents dinners, fertilizer tags, and mortgaged farms float before Reuben in his dreams and he awakens to a dread realization of the truthfulness of the situation. Alas, poor Kolb!" Kolb claimed that as a matter of fact he had frequently paid his own railroad fare and if a complete record had been kept it would show the state owing him several hundred dollars. (*Advertiser*, May 5, 1891, Mar. 4, 1890, Oct. 17, 1891; *Birmingham News*, Jan. 4, 1892 and Nov. 17, 1891.)

²⁸*Brown, Alabama*, p. 311; *Age-Herald*, May 20, 1891.

reversed the ruling of the lower court and Lane retained his office.²⁹ Lane, an Allianceman, it later developed, had participated in the disreputable Athens indignation meeting against Governor Jones.³⁰

Kolb's supporters were of a somewhat different type from those of 1890. He still had the bulk of the Alliance with him, although Democratic papers were urging them not to be duped by a self-seeking shyster.³¹ The *Shelby Chronicle* said that Kolb, by the company he was now keeping, cared not a cofferdam for the farmer, the height of his ambition being to become governor,³² by whatever means and get a few more 'draws at the public teat.' The word "company" had reference to Kolb's new alignment with three or four Birmingham lawyers, P. C. Bowman, Colonel B. L. Hibbard, J. J. Altman, and E. T. Taliaferro, staunch Democrat two years before and chairman of the resolutions committee at the state convention.³³ This 'syndicate of lawyers' was ineligible to the Alliance but waged a hot battle for Kolb over the state from now on. Too, there seemed a clear tendency on the part of the Republicans to support Kolb. Realizing they had no chance to elect one of their own party, it was said they saw in Kolb's election a splendid chance to split the Democratic party and thereby fulfill the wishes of the pilgrims to Alabama from Kansas and other Western states. These visitors had been particularly prominent in Alabama, working hand in hand with Kolb.³⁴ "Sockless" Simpson, "Whiskers" Peffer, Mrs. Lease ("More Hell") and others had taken an active part in Birmingham during the summer and fall of 1891, urging the Ocala platform.

Each county was to set its own date for primary or convention, the process spreading over months and furnishing much opportunity for unfair methods. The Jefferson county primary, though purely a party affair and not sanctioned by law, was to be somewhat like the Australian ballot system.³⁵ Rather to the surprise of Jones

²⁹Brown, *Alabama*, p. 311; *Advertiser*, May 21, 1891, Sept. 2, 1891, Sept. 4, 1891; Oct. 4, 1891.

³⁰*Age-Herald*, Sept. 2, 5, 6, 25, and Oct. 4, 1891.

³¹*News*, Feb. 17, 1892, Nov. 15, 1891.

³²*News*, Jan. 11, 1892.

³³*News*, Jan. 15, 1892; Dec. 4, 1891; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 12, 1891, Dec. 4, 1891; *Advertiser*, Nov. 20, 1891.

³⁴*News*, Oct. 29, 1891; Dec. 4, 14, 1891; Nov. 23, 1891, Jan. 15, 25, 1892; Feb. 5, 1892; *Advertiser*, July 31, 1891.

³⁵*Age-Herald*, Dec. 21, 1891, DuBose, Article No. 104.

and his supporters, the county gave him a majority of 5314 to 4676 votes, assuring Jones, under the prorate plan, of 14 and Kolb 12 of the county's delegates to the state convention. Kolb's forces had claimed that Jefferson would give him a huge majority and that "as goes Jefferson, so goes the state."³⁶ Kolb had a majority of the Jefferson county executive committee on his side, yet strangely enough the Kolb members, as if doubtful of their strength, had held out for a prorate of the delegates.³⁷

After Jefferson came Madison! Beat primaries were used and this too was expected to be a Kolb county, for he was said to control the executive committee which, unlike Jefferson, refused to agree on a prorate basis.³⁸ O. R. Hundley and Charles P. Lane, Kolb's chief lieutenants in the county, spread the news that Jones was a corporation lawyer. Yet Hundley himself was a corporation attorney. Unfair methods on the part of Kolb's forces doubtless reacted against him. The executive committee had called this "snap" primary only eleven days in advance of the election. The governor jumped up to Madison for five days and did effective work against odds, winning a moral victory in the county. Jones' forces claimed 47 to 46 delegates and Kolb's forces claimed a like number. Finally the county convention became "so hot" that on January 11 it was agreed to divide the delegates equally giving four to Jones and four to Kolb. By vote of 42 to 39 the convention refused to instruct Kolb's delegates³⁹ to vote for him. Mr. D. W. McIver, at the time reporter for the *Advertiser*, now (1926) editor of the *Montgomery Times*, says he and Governor Jones were present at the county convention, remaining on the outside of the small log house, and that the Kolb forces claimed snow and rain had kept their men away from the polls, and that only by prolonged argument

³⁶*Age-Herald*, Dec. 22, 30, 1891; *News*, Dec. 22, 1891.

³⁷*Advertiser*, Dec. 22, 24, 29, 1891; *News*, Dec. 22, 1891; *News*, Jan. 4, 1892, quoting the *North Alabamian*. The *News* declared two days later that the primary election was a success, that elections might come and go, but what Birmingham was most interested in was the coming of the steel plant! Another journal remarked that Governor Jones had kissed the wife of only one miner and had carried the county against supposedly heavy odds by a 638 majority, and that there was after all something in a kiss!

³⁸*Advertiser*, Jan. 10, 12, 13, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 104 in *Age-Herald*, Dec. 25, 1891.

³⁹*Advertiser*, Jan. 10, 12, 13, 1892.

did the Kolb men get the better end of the agreement on a split delegation. Had Jones' forces not given over here, Madison would have gone against Kolb and, according to Mr. McIver ("Pole Cat McIver"), Kolb would have withdrawn from the race and there would have been no Independent-Populist movement in Alabama.⁴⁰ According to many it was the people rebuking Kolb's autocratic chicanery that "snowed"⁴¹ under the Genial Reuben who had claimed that he would go to the Montgomery convention with delegates from 60 of the 66 counties hung to his belt.⁴² These two supposedly Kolb counties had virtually gone against him and the voice of these counties probably gave him more encouragement to run as an Independent than as a straight Democrat since he was sure to receive the 40,000 Republican votes of the state.⁴³

January 26, the State Executive Committee had formulated and issued rules for the county elections. By a vote of 15 Jones men to 7 Kolb men it was agreed that county elections other than Jefferson and Madison (already over) should be held under regulations fixed by the state committee, that no prorated plan should be allowed, that a man's democracy should be gauged by his past action, that only Democrats were to help name the delegates, and that primaries should be announced at least one month in advance.⁴⁴ June 8 was named as the date for the State Convention and the old basis of representation was to be used.

But it was futile for the committee to formulate regulations. The county committees broke them at will.⁴⁵ The Butler county convention aiming to shut out Jones' chances was set for January 30. Jones' forces complained against the 'snap' call as another unfair attempt at gag rule. There was only one Jones man on the executive committee, yet the almost unexpected happened again when Jones won in the primaries 56 to 52. When the Kolb forces found themselves unable to control the county convention at Greenville it split in two factions, each

⁴⁰Jones, *Scrap Book*, I, p. 57.

⁴¹*Advertiser*, Jan. 10, 13, 1892; Jones, *Scrap Book* II, p. 5; *News*, Jan. 12, 1892.

⁴²DuBose, Article No. 104; *News*, Jan. 22, 1892.

⁴³DuBose, Article No. 104; *News*, Feb. 2, 1892; *Advertiser*, Jan. 27, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 105, Jones V, p. 74.

⁴⁴DuBose, Article No. 105, Jones, V, p. 74; *Advertiser*, Jan. 24, 31, 1892, Feb. 6, 1892; *News*, Jan. 25, 31, 1892, Feb. 2, 1892.

⁴⁵*News*, Feb. 3, 11, 1892; *Advertiser*, Jan. 31, 1892, Feb. 2, 1892.

naming a ticket and instructing delegates. This was the initial step in the schism of 1892. The Kolb delegates were instructed to vote for Kolb for governor, A. A. Wiley for Congress, John Purifoy for auditor, etc.⁴⁶ This defeat of Kolb was like that in Madison attributed to the desire of the people for fair play. One paper called it "Kolb's Waterloo," saying the mask had fallen from this "seemingly gay, universal office hunter" revealing "the hardened features of the political desperado" who cared for naught save his own thirst for public office.⁴⁷ One of Kolb's chief spokesmen, the *Huntsville Mercury*, now "darned" the black belt and urged⁴⁸ that the "seat of war" be removed again to North Alabama. But he was reminded that Kolb had also met his doom in Madison, a farming county, where he had the support of a strong news organ.⁴⁹ "Three Up! Three Down!," cried Jones' friends.⁵⁰ Jefferson! Madison!! Butler!!! "On to Marengo."

February 16, occurred the beat primaries in Marengo, another black-belt county, with the county convention two days later. Kolb had carried the county two years earlier, but now the primaries went for Jones, who would receive its 16 delegates.⁵¹ The result was described as "a genuine ground swell on the banks of the Bigbee." Thus a fourth so-called Kolb county had been won by Jones.⁵²

Meanwhile, other counties were speaking. Clarke's popular vote stood 925 for Jones and 795 for Kolb and the delegation was divided equally.⁵³ In Fayette, a rural,

⁴⁷*News*, Feb. 3, 1892.

⁴⁸*News*, Feb. 4, 1892.

⁴⁹*Advertiser*, Jan. 31, 1892.

⁵⁰*News*, Feb. 24, 1892; *Advertiser*, 17, 1892.

⁵¹*News*, Feb. 24, 1892; *Advertiser*, 17, 1892.

⁵²*News*, Feb. 11, 22, 1892, quoting *Eufaula Times*; DuBose Article No. 106 in Jones, V, p. 75; *Advertiser*, Feb. 21, 1892. Various excuses were assigned by Kolb for his having lost three counties. The Republican corporations had beaten him in Jefferson; the inclement weather had kept the farmers from the polls in Madison; the weather was too good for ploughing for the farmers to turn out to vote in Butler (it was January); and the negroes had voted for Jones in Marengo, thereby defeating Kolb. In each case he complained of the too short notice regarding elections, that he had not had time to canvass! About this time Kolb was branded by his home paper as a "big humbug." In Marengo he had refused to address a crowd of *thirteen*, saying he could not "enthuse" over so small a bunch!

⁵³*News*, Feb. 16, 1892.

hill county, the noisy convention "broke all to pieces,"—"nothing like it ever having been seen in Fayette county." The Jones forces claimed the Republicans had voted for Kolb in several beats. One of the conventions instructed its delegates for Jones as governor and Bankhead for Congress, while Kolb and Davis were favored for these offices by the other group.⁵⁴ Selection of delegates in other counties fell thick and fast during the next few months. In Bibb, the home of the President of the State Alliance, the "straight" Democrats refused to participate, realizing they had no chance and too they said the convention was not in conformity with the rules of the state committee.⁵⁵ Dallas gave her 26 delegates to Jones; Bullock went for Kolb again, as did Henry for Kolb and Oates who had nothing in common.⁵⁶ Franklin carried out the Alliance program and aided by its large number of Republicans went strong for Kolb.⁵⁷ Much curiosity prevailed as to why Kolb did not rush the election in Barbour county where he should be strong and by winning a big victory in his home county he would be greatly helped throughout the state.⁵⁸ Indeed, when the election came off Jones won in Barbour, getting its 17 delegates. He even carried Eufaula, Kolb's home beat, and a majority of beats in the county. As if to heap fire upon Kolb, J. G. Guice, the former victim of Kolb's cotton transactions, was elected Chairman of the County Democratic Executive Committee. Two years earlier Barbour had given 16 delegates to Kolb but they were now instructed for Jones with H. D. Clayton, Kolb's former leader now leading the Jones forces.⁵⁹

⁵⁴DuBose, Article No. 106, *Jones Scrap Book V*, p. 75. *News*, Feb. 15, 16, 1892.

⁵⁵*News*, March 10, 1892, May 15, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 105.

⁵⁶*Advertiser*, March 4, 1892; May 15, 1892; DuBose Article No. 105.

⁵⁷*News*, March 20, 1892. By March 12, fourteen counties had acted. The delegates standing 75 for Jones to 55 for Kolb, whereas the same counties had given Jones a majority of 15 two years before. So close was the race considered that one paper observed that "Goode is a mighty good campaigner."

⁵⁸*News*, Feb. 11, 22, 1892, quoting *Eufaula Times*; DuBose, Article 106 in *Jones Scrap Book V*, p. 75; *Advertiser*, Feb. 21, 1892.

⁵⁹*News*, April 5, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 106, *Jones Scrap Book V*, p. 70. One of the bitterest contests in the whole state was in Lee county where with the Kolb faction in control, violating the state committee's regulations by allowing each beat regardless of size five delegates to the county convention, 500 voters were able to control the county, while 1500—said to be Democrats—vir-

By June 6, only two days previous to the state convention⁶⁰ all counties except Coffee had spoken, 462 of the total 466 delegates having been selected, Jones having already 82 votes above the majority required for nomination. In view of what happened at the state convention in June, 1892, it is interesting to know something of Mr. Kolb's attitude, judged by his own words, regarding a third party or an independent ticket which he was accused of favoring. The *Montgomery Journal*, at times a Kolb sympathizer, had deplored the action of the state executive committee in its January meeting, and then predicted that if Kolb should have a large following of friends they might decide to meet in Montgomery at the same time as the State Democratic Convention, nominate Kolb and put out a full ticket. The *Journal* regretted that such a split would lead to the election of a Republican governor, whom it believed the executive committee would prefer over Kolb's election.⁶¹ Only one month before the convention⁶² Kolb was quizzed by a reporter and said all reports as to his running as an Independent if defeated at the convention were "malicious lies." "I am a Democrat, have always been and intend to remain one," said he. But he was opposed to "machine democracy" and did not "intend to be swindled out of the delegates" that he was entitled to. He would be guided by the action of the state committee but intended that the contested delegates should be seated by a majority of the convention. Even then if defeated in the convention, he said he would not run as an Independent but, said he, "I will run as the choice of the organized Democracy of the state. Such a thing may cause two separate conventions, and one will be composed of machine Democrats, and the other of simon-pure Jeffersonian Democrats, and it is these I represent and by whom I will be nominated." This indicates clearly that Kolb did not intend to be snowed under and shelved peacefully.

usually had no choice in the party councils. There were 2000 white voters in the county, three-fourths (1500) of them being in the Opelika, Phoenix City, Auburn and Salem beats, yet these beats had only 20 delegates, while the other ten beats with a total of only 500 whites had 50 delegates. Opelika with 500 Democratic voters had the same representation as the small adjoining beat. (*Advertiser*, Feb. 4, 1892; *News*, Feb. 16, 1892).

⁶⁰*News*, June 6, 1892; *Advertiser*, June 7, 1892.

⁶¹*News*, Jan. 25, 1892.

⁶²*Advertiser*, April 30, 1890.

THE STATE CONVENTIONS OF 1892

The memorable convention of 1890 was to be eclipsed⁶³ by that of 1892 which met June 8. A preliminary meeting had been held by the state committee in June to settle certain details regarding contests in numerous counties. Most of these contests turned on the rule of the 1890 convention "that county representation" in the convention in 1892 should be based on the vote cast for governor⁴⁴ in 1890. The Kolb men now condemned this rule, first because they claimed there was no opposition at the polls to Governor Jones in 1890 sufficient to bring out the vote in the white counties for him, and therefore those counties which now claimed to be favorable to the nomination of Kolb were inadequately represented in the nominating convention. A second complaint was that the negro vote returned from counties with a large negro population as cast for Jones in 1890 was in a large measure fictitious, thus securing to those counties which were now for Jones a false weight in the convention.⁶⁵ Kolb said the negroes were not Democrats and that it was absurd to claim such, that it was a fight in the party itself for party domination, and that the negroes had been forced into the electorate by action from without the state. Thus one of the real bones of contention between the Jones and Kolb factions was the basis of apportionment of delegates to the convention. Both wings of the party of 1874 claimed white supremacy as their goal, yet as Kolb contended, the representation was based on the Jones vote of 1890 which clearly included many negroes.⁶⁶ Another grievance of the Kolb forces was that the State Executive Committee of 15 Jones men and 7 Kolb men,—a partisan committee named by the 1890 convention,—was still fostering partisanship and dominating unfairly the party machinery. However, in the convention of 1890 Kolb controlled the vote of all but two or four black-belt counties and he made no complaint over it. There was no question of

⁶³ *News*, April 15 and June 8, 1892; DuBose, Articles Nos. 111 and 112.

⁶⁴ DuBose, Articles Nos. 111 and 112.

⁶⁵ DuBose, Article No. 107; *News*, April 15, 1892.

⁶⁶ DuBose, Article No. 110, in Jones V, p. 106. In Dallas county, for instance, Jones got 7,883 votes and his Republican opponent, B. M. Long, received only 1128. Barbour gave Jones 4,892 and Long only 389. Certain other counties showed similar eccentricities and discrepancies. This gave a few men in the black counties much power in the convention based on fictitious negro votes.

democracy then, said the Jones cohorts. Now since Jones had carried to the convention all but four of these counties there was complaint on all sides. Thus the Fifteenth Amendment was back of the split in Alabama Democracy.

Political pandemonium predominated. Instead of one state convention, there were two, with rival tickets and rival platforms. The Democratic party of 1892 was a split, dismembered party. There was a complete rupture in the Democratic party⁶⁷ of 1874—a rupture planned well in advance. On Tuesday night, June 7, before the convention was to assemble the following day, Captain Kolb and his forces met in McDonald's Opera House in response to a circular which he had sent to his supporters. Plans had been arranged in advance, admissions were by ticket and the session was secret. Captain Goodwyn, Alliance leader, presided. The object of the caucus it was claimed was to prepare certain proposals to present to the Democratic convention.⁶⁸ Some 300 persons were present, probably 75 of whom were delegates due to attend the Capitol Convention the next day. The others were Kolb supporters but not delegates.⁶⁹

O. R. Hundley, in the Opera House caucus, proposed a resolution to appoint a committee of nine, one from each congressional district, to confer with a similar committee to be appointed by the Capitol Convention to work out a harmonious settlement of the differences in the Democratic party. The resolution being passed unanimously Chairman Goodwyn named P. G. Bowman as chairman of the conference committee. S. M. Adams was one of the members. The resolution was read before the state convention the next day and upon motion of General E. W. Pettus, it was "placed under the table." Governor Jones was reported to favor a joint conference. The gist of the Kolb plan was to have the whole battle fought over again and on June 28 hold primaries over the entire state to determine who would be the nominee of the Democratic party for governor.⁷⁰ The Kolb faction claimed 280 delegates, which was a majority.

⁶⁷ DuBose, Article No. 111.

⁶⁸ *Advertiser*, June 8, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 111.

⁶⁹ *Advertiser*, June 9, 1892.

⁷⁰ DuBose, Article No. 111; *Advertiser*, June 8, 1892; *News*, June 11, 1892. One paper characterized the Opera House Convention thus: "The Bastard Convention was a puny infant. Like a mule, it has neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity. Its

Receiving no favor from the "stand pat" Democrats, the Opera House Convention met again at 2 P.M. on Wednesday, June 8, while the state convention was in session at the Capitol, where Hundley, Taliaferro, Goodwyn and many other Kolb supporters were now present. Attorney P. C. Bowman was now made president of the "Rump Convenetion." President Adams was on the stage and made a "redhot" speech as did Augustus Hobson, brother of the "Hero of the Merrimac."⁷¹ Upon roll call 40 of the 66 counties responded, however, many of the delegates were said to be volunteers without credentials. Barbour, Kolb's home county was not represented. After the appointment of a platform committee, the caucus adjourned to meet again at 8 P.M. The platform committee consisted of Bowman of Jefferson as Chairman, S. M. Adams of Bibb, and Zell Gaston of Butler.

Meanwhile the Capitol Convention had attended to preliminaries,⁷² appointed a credentials committee of 22, with the young Oscar W. Underwood as chairman, and adjourned till June 9, when the convention renominated Thomas G. Jones over Kolb by a vote of 372 to 67. Upon motion of Jim Brown, Jones' nomination was made unanimous, amid the wildest enthusiasm. Even Hundley of Madison voted for the governor, and Henry D. Clayton, young stalwart of Barbour, spoke amid the Democratic love feast, saying the convention two years before was wiser than he in refusing to nominate Kolb, the present "bolter." Even the erratic Charles P. Lane of the *Huntsville Mercury* was now for Jones. He had stood for Kolb until he had recently "learned his real character," and "then he left him." Colonel E. T. Taliaferro had also deserted Kolb and would support the Democratic nominee in the future as in the past. With much jubilation a complete Democratic ticket was named. W. L. Martin of Jackson for Attorney-General; John Purifoy of Wilcox, Auditor; Craig Smith of Dallas for Treasurer; J. G. Harris of Chambers, Superintendent of Education; Hector D. Lane of Madison, Commissioner of Agriculture; Joseph D. Barrow of Clay, Secretary of State. Nominees were also named for Supreme Court Justices.

An interesting set of resolutions, with H. D. Clayton as chairman of the committee, was presented and adopted.

name is Kolb Adams." (*Russellville Idea*, quoted by the *News*, June 27, 1892.)

⁷¹ *Advertiser*, June 9, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 111.

⁷² *News*, June 8, 10, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 112.

The chief provisions expressed opposition to Federal domination in state affairs, opposition to the Force Bill, the tariff, extravagance of the national administration, monopolies and government ownership of railroads and telegraphs; endorsed Cleveland for President; endorsed Jones' administration, free silver, free labor as against convict labor, better schools, election of railroad commissioners and primary election laws, with a secret ballot. The convention for harmony's sake declined to adopt a resolution for the call of a constitutional convention, but adopted rules for the regulation of elections and recommended that representation in state conventions be based upon population rather than the vote for governor in the last election. This was a vital change, for complaint against the prevailing system, bitterly opposed by the white counties, was one real cause of the Populist movement. Strange enough the motion for the change in representation came from the black belt. In the convention of 1892, there were 466 delegates, but the new plan would call for 514 with considerably more strength going to the white counties.⁷³

Delegates to the Chicago National Convention were named by each of the conventions. Ex-Governor Thomas H. Watts was chairman of the Capitol delegation which was instructed strongly for Cleveland. The Opera House Convention named 23 delegates uninstructed, but were to oppose Cleveland and Wall Street and favor free silver.⁷⁴

To turn again to the Opera House Convention where real history was being made, Kolb claimed at least 286 delegates and a popular majority of from 15,000 to 50,000. Putting himself in the hands of his supporters, the "Rump Convention," upon nomination by Zell Gaston, young lawyer of Butler county, named Captain Kolb for governor. The nomination was confirmed by acclamation of "several hundred throats." Kolb who was speaking almost all the time of the convention, now delivered an "address" from a prepared manuscript accepting the nomination. He repeated his old story of fraud but said it was the happiest day of his life to receive the nomination for governor from the people, the highest power in the land.⁷⁵ He urged the abolition of the existing convict system, and the enactment of election laws to secure

⁷³ *Advertiser*, June 14, 1892.

⁷⁴ *Advertiser*, June 9, 10, 1892.

⁷⁵ DuBose, Article No. 112; *Advertiser*, June 8 and 10, 1892; *News*, June 6, 7, 9, 1892.

and enforce a "fair ballot and an honest count." "Let all," said he, "go forth to battle on these lines and on the first Monday in August we will achieve one of the greatest victories in the history of the party."

The Opera House group put out a full ticket, except for the supreme court justices. Some of Kolb's enemies said they would have named candidates for the supreme court but did not have enough lawyer friends for the positions.⁷⁶ The convention adopted a set of resolutions⁷⁷ not so different from those of the Democratic convention, favoring currency expansion, free and unlimited coinage of silver, fair elections, "protection of the colored race in their legal rights" (a bait for negro votes), good schools, equitable and just taxation, legislation for the improvement of agriculture and labor; opposed the convict lease system, national banks, trusts and monopolies; favored election of railroad commissioners by the people, and advocated a national graduated income tax.

The "Kolb Rump Convention" adjourned or "sine died" on June 9 to go forth on its mission of trouble and discord. Tom Long of Walker county⁷⁸ put the case rather forcefully in the Capitol Convention. Referring to the Reverend Samuel M. Adams' going into a revolt against the Democratic party, he said: "Adams has gone where I can not follow him, much less God!"

"And Kolb did bolt! May the good Lord have mercy on his August remains!" The state election was to be in August! In this fashion did one paper⁷⁹ express the fulfillment of a prophecy that Kolb would bolt the Democratic party and run as an Independent.⁸⁰ Yet this irregular procedure was not unexpected by those familiar with his temperament. A bolt had been widely predicted and many would have been surprised had it not

⁷⁶ *Advertiser*, July 1, 1892; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312. L. C. Ramsey of Montgomery was named for Secretary of State, but declared himself a Democrat and repudiated the nomination; W. Lynch of Macon for Auditor; S. M. Adams of Bibb for Commissioner of Agriculture; B. K. Collier, an Independent-Republican, for Attorney-General; T. K. Jones, Tuscaloosa for Treasurer; J. O. Turner, St. Clair for Superintendent of Education, but they had used his name without authorization and he declined. (*Advertiser*, June 10, 1892; *News*, June 10, 12, 1892; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312).

⁷⁷ *Advertiser*, June 10, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 112.

⁷⁸ *News*, June 10, 12, 1892.

⁷⁹ *Birmingham News*, June 18, 1892 quoting the *Coosa River News*; *Advertiser*, June 12, 1892.

⁸⁰ *News*, June 6, 14, 16, 1892.

happened.⁸¹ "It appears in my articles on the election of 1890," continued DuBose, "as plain as day that the following of Captain Kolb anticipated and prepared for the Opera House convention." "It shows," said he, "that the gravamen of the argument was the common rule of apportionment for representation in the state convention" and the fact that the State Executive Committee had power to pass upon the credentials of county delegates.⁸²

It was clearer than ever that the Republicans, from Washington down, rejoiced over the schism among the Democrats and that they would support Kolb in the election.⁸³ With only a few exceptions they worked for Kolb and it was no mean support to have the aid of postmasters, United States marshals, district attorneys and private citizens of Republican faith.⁸⁴ Indeed positive evidence was at hand showing that by formal, written agreement the Jeffersonians, that is the "Demopolites," had agreed to vote for Harrison electors in November, 1892, if the Republicans would put out no state ticket and would support the Kolb faction in the August election. The National Republican Committee was also to furnish financial aid.⁸⁵

"Shall Kolb rule or ruin" became the cry. The Democrats, seeing a herculean task ahead, tried hard to win back the bolters. Many good farmers had been misled

⁸¹ *News*, June 7, 1892; *Calera Journal*, June 7, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 110. J. W. DuBose in a private letter to Judge T. G. Jones, March 15, 1914, said there had probably not been an hour since the momentous convention of 1890 that Kolb and Adams "did not intend (if unable to win otherwise) to precipitate this conflict."

⁸² *News*, June 14, 1892. The *Selma Journal* made the interesting comment: Mr. Kolb may not have raised Mr. Guice's cotton weights; he may not have charged the state with railroad fares that he never paid; he may not have charged the state with fertilizer bags that he sold and converted the proceeds to his own use. But Mr. Kolb has committed a crime greater than all of them. He has sold or attempted to sell his party, his race, his blood to the negroes and Radicals. Having for five years set himself up as the self-constituted candidate of the farmers for governor, and failing to get the nomination in the primary and convention, he was now attempting to "Mahonize" Alabama. The Democrats contended that it was equivalent to joining the Republicans and inviting the Force Bill.

⁸³ *News*, July 2, 14, 16, 24, 30, 1892; *News*, June 6, 18, 1892; *Advertiser*, July 1, 5, 8, 1892.

⁸⁴ *Advertiser*, Aug. 10, 1892.

⁸⁵ *News*, July 5, 6, 8, 16, 23, 24, 1894; *Advertiser*, July 5, 8, 1892; also *Advertiser*, Feb. 21, March 6, and July 13, 1894.

and it was believed they would now see their mistake and remain true to Democracy.⁸⁶ Kolb's forces cried down with the boss and the machine, yet the Democrats claimed Kolb to be the one great, self-constituted boss, wrecking the Alliance and deceiving the farmers for his own political preferment. Much was made of the secret order, Brother Adams' "Gideon's Band," within the Alliance as evidence of Kolb's determination to win or ruin.⁸⁷

While the Jones followers were lauding his sound business achievements urging all true men to stand by the party, and predicting the direst chaos should Kolb be elected, Kolb and his mixed group were scouring the state, raising all the furor possible. Particularly fanatical and demagogic was P. C. Bowman with his "ballot, bayonet and blood" policy.⁸⁸ This fire-eating demagog⁸⁹ ranted, threatened, and coaxed the negroes to go to the polls with knives, razors and muskets and to see that a free ballot and a fair count were secured.⁹⁰ B. K. Collier, Republican candidate for attorney-general on the "Demopulite" ticket was another Radical, who saw that an exaggerated account of the speeches of Kolb's men got into the *New York Tribune*. The big idea was to deceive the Republican National Committee to get funds, for Kolb's printing bills were not yet paid.⁹¹ Bowman urged in his speeches at Opelika—fertile soil—that the farmers "throw off the yoke of the Bourbons." Davis of Fayette proclaimed it a contest between "plutocrats and the working people."⁹² Davis and the Kolb group trying to befriend the negro denounced bitterly the thirteenth plank of the Democratic platform (for election reforms) as an effort to disfranchise all poor and non-college men. He railed, too, against black belt strength saying Dallas had 1100 whites with 26 delegates to the state convention, while Fayette had 1800 whites and only 4 delegates.⁹³

⁸⁶ *News*, July 24, 1892.

⁸⁷ *News*, June 27, 1892; *Advertiser*, June 29, 1892, July 6, 15, 1892; for a full account of Gideon's Band, see *Advertiser*, July 6, 10, 15, 22, 1892.

⁸⁸ *Advertiser*, July 19, 1892.

⁸⁹ *Advertiser*, July 19, 1892.

⁹⁰ *Advertiser*, July 5, 13, 16, 17, 19, 1892; *News*, July 16, 17, 30, 1892.

⁹¹ *Advertiser*, July 19, 1892.

⁹² *Advertiser*, July 5, 1892.

⁹³ *Advertiser*, June 25, 1892; *News*, June 6, 1912, and July 23, 28, 1892.

The more enlightened negroes were skeptical, and several colored Jones Clubs were formed. The *Republican Echo*, colored paper in Birmingham, urged the negroes to stay free from the spider's web. Democrats were implored to register and vote against the fusion of "Kolbites—Republicans—Third Partyites—Ex-Greenbackers—Scalawags—Rag-Tails and Bobtails."⁹⁴ These might vote for Weaver but no Democrat would. Already Kolb was accused of having on foot a scheme to elect legislators favorable to him so that if defeated at the polls he might ask a "Rump Legislature" to seat him as governor.⁹⁵

August 1 arrived and "the most important election since 1874 was over." Jones and the Democratic ticket had won. Organized, true blue Democracy had again triumphed, and the state's progress would not be turned backward. Yet Jones' majority⁹⁶ was only 11,435 out of a total vote of 242,483. This majority was about one-eighth that of 1890. A small majority but not so bad when it is considered that from the first Jones had been on the defensive. He was an accidental candidate in 1890 and had always to explain how his 45 delegates could make him governor. Furthermore all political opponents voted against him. More than 4,000 more votes were cast for governor than for any other office. But all talk of sixty or a hundred thousand majority was a joke. Yet, the *Jasper Eagle* reflected: "The Good Lord has certainly smiled upon us once."⁹⁷ With Jones⁹⁸ the entire Democratic ticket had been elected, including a majority of the legislators.⁹⁹ Yet Kolb claimed he had won by 40,000 majority and been robbed or counted out again, and would contest the election in the legislature and have it seat him as governor.¹⁰⁰

There is no question that Kolb received¹⁰¹ not only the

⁹⁴ *News*, July 8, 1892; *Advertiser*, July 23, 1892.

⁹⁵ *News*, July, 7, 19, 1892.

⁹⁶ *Advertiser*, Nov. 18, 1892; *News*, August 1, 9, 12; Nov. 18, 1892; DuBose Article No. 113; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312.

⁹⁷ *News*, June 8, 12, 15, 1892.

⁹⁸ The Alabama election was pivotal. Alabama sounded the bugle note. It was the first state of the year to test out the combined opposition strength. Had Jones not won in August, there is little telling what Alabama and the South might have done in the national election in November. (*Advertiser*, March 10, 1893.)

⁹⁹ Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312; Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 264.

¹⁰⁰ *News*, Aug. 9, 1892; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312.

¹⁰¹ Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 264; *Advertiser*, Nov. 18, 1892; *News*, Aug. 15, 1892.

Third party votes, but the Republican vote as well. About sixty thousand more votes were cast than in the ordinary biennial election. Never had the Democratic vote run to such a total as those figures.¹⁰²

With the Democratic party split and all malcontents ready to register their opposition against the party, what might be expected in the November election? Jones' small victory in August brought many to realize that defeat in the Congressional and Presidential election was possible. With a view to clarifying the air and harmonizing the two dissenting groups, the Democratic State Executive Committee held a meeting in Montgomery, August 11. Since some Democrats had failed to support the nominee August 1, it was necessary to set rules for participation in the November election. The committee, in an effort to harmonize the warring factions, decreed that those who had not supported Jones would not be read out of the party but were on equal terms in the party with Jones' supporters if they acted in harmony and supported the nominee in the November election.¹⁰³ This was a good start "to get together." "Recognition, Concession, Harmony" became the Democratic slogan, especially of the *Birmingham News* and many of the leaders. The *Advertiser* wished to read the Riot Act to the *News* which had so suddenly begun to cry harmony and down with the bosses.¹⁰⁴ The rank and file of both factions were ready to conciliate, yet the bosses in both groups were said to oppose compromise—the offices being too few to go around. The governor followed the advice of some of his friends and issued a public letter urging conciliation and saneness.¹⁰⁵ Some Kolb supporters who had aided him as personal friends, as Alliancemen, and as

¹⁰² DuBose, Article No. 113, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, V, p. 107. From 1892 till today friends and foes of the respective candidates have waxed hot over the correct vote, and especially as to its distribution. It is very commonly heard even today among the masses that Kolb was elected but counted out in 1892 and 1894. Colonel Gates thought Jones received a majority of the white votes but that Kolb carried a majority of the white counties. The *Advertiser* thought Jones received two-thirds of the Democratic and also a majority of the white vote of the state and that Kolb majorities were largely the negro and Republican votes. The *News* thought Jones probably got more negro votes and Kolb the majority of white votes. (*Advertiser*, Aug. 10, 11, 18, 1892; *News*, Aug. 9, 18, 1892.)

¹⁰³ *News*, Aug. 12, 15, 1892.

¹⁰⁴ *News*, Aug. 9, 11, 12, 1892.

¹⁰⁵ *News*, Aug. 9, 19, 23, 1892.

opponents of boss rule, now began to fall in line again with the regulation Democrats.¹⁰⁶ The *News'* conciliatory scheme was quite different from P. C. Bowman's plan to have the election results arbitrated to see whether Jones or Kolb should become governor! Jones' re-election said the *News*, was *un fait accompli* and settled, but the door was wide open for future harmony. Those who had left the party might now return through the door they had left the party. The test was to be their vote in the November election.

But would the Kolb faction accept the verdict of the August election and return to organized Democracy? Or would "R(un) F(orever) Kolb,"—now thoroughly trained on the race track,—continue to cry fraud and perpetuate his factional fight, spreading discord and disharmony throughout the state? Would he now make good his threat in his letter of April 22, 1892, to W. H. Welch by falling heart and soul into the People's party which had been organized by J. C. Manning at Ashland, Clay county, April 10, 1892? There had as yet been nothing but hard sledding for this simon-pure, middle-of-the-road wing of the Populists of which "Apostle" Manning and Gaither were said to constitute two-thirds, the other third being "fearfully scattered." Yet, in its several conventions Manning, Gaither and A. P. Longshore had predicted that they would manifest a strength undreamed of by the old parties. Longshore had said: "We are young, but our banner will soon wave in triumph over the United States."¹⁰⁷ Was not this the most propitious moment for Kolb to jump fully into the Populist party instead of continuing to fight as a Populist under the name of a Democrat? Now that the National People's party had been definitely launched at Omaha,¹⁰⁸ July 4, 1892, with General J. B. ("Jumping Jim") Weaver of Iowa and General J. G. Field of Virginia as candidates for Presi-

¹⁰⁶ *News*, Aug. 10, 13, 1892.

¹⁰⁷ *News*, April 15, 19, 25 and June 23, 1892; *Advertiser*, July 5, 1892. Judge Longshore has been a Republican since the nineties. Professor S. M. Dinkins, an ardent Populist, says: "I was present at the meeting in Shelby county where it was agreed to form the party. I was the only man to speak against a new party. I advised capturing the Democratic party. I did not join the new party because I indorsed all of its principles or that I thought it would succeed. I foretold at the meeting its ultimate failure. It was a protest movement, though, and I wanted to hurl some bolts at the old parties."

¹⁰⁸ Shippee, pp. 185, 191; Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade*, p. 144.

dent and Vice-President, respectively, there would be greater incentive to join the new party.¹⁰⁹

Captain Kolb's letter to W. H. Welch of Randolph county, April 22, 1892, urging him to send a Kolb delegation to the state convention so disgusted Welch that he turned to the Democrats and allowed the letter to be published.¹¹⁰ This letter said in part: "Let my friends be urged to turn out at your primaries and vote for Kolb delegates to your county convention. We can't whip this fight through a Populist party movement now. The time has not come for that yet. Tell our friends just to wait till this state fight is over. I must have a delegate from Randolph. If you are swindled out of it in any way, then send me a delegate anyhow. This contest is *sure*¹¹¹ to end with *two conventions* and go on till August. I will be the nominee of one and represent the simon-pure Jeffersonian Democracy, and Jones the nominee of the other, representing the machine Democracy. I will then wipe up the earth with him, and beat him 50,000. They are sending up contesting delegations from many of my counties and absolutely robbing me of others. They stole Lowndes, Autauga and Jackson from me, but they have called mass meetings and will send me delegations anyhow. If my plans are carried out, we can easily whip this fight. We will not call it in this state fight the Populist (or People's) party, but do it as I have stated, we will then carry a large element that would not go if we called it a Third or Populist party. You understand my position—send me a regular delegate if possible, but be certain to send me a delegation and let them be true and tried men, with yourself at its head. I hope you will *ship* the fight and keep the other side from sending a delegation.

"Write me and keep me posted. I will not be able to get to your county before your convention. Sincerely your friend, R. F. Kolb."

The *Alliance Herald*¹¹² announced sullenly: "No compromise is possible." Bowman, chairman of the Kolb

¹⁰⁹ The *Birmingham News*, July 7, 1892, said: "Weaver of the People's party and Kolb of the Bolter's party are like Colonel Hibbard's old Conecuh county farmer's brindle oxen. Their friends hitch them up every now and then and run them just to show them 'what darn fools are.'"

¹¹⁰ McVey, *Populist Movement*, p. 147.

¹¹¹ This letter was published in the *LaFayette Sun*, and is here taken from the *Birmingham News*, July 16, 1892.

¹¹² *News*, August 11, 14, 1892.

state committee, in a speech at Cullman, said they had been defrauded and would listen to no "harmony" talk regarding the future. These cries of fraud had spread over the nation. Kolb was the martyr. Even President Harrison, whose party had put out no ticket in Alabama, extended his condolence to Kolb as a specimen of election frauds.¹¹³ The *Alliance Herald*, claiming that Kolb had been elected by a big majority but counted out, demanded that he be declared governor. It also advised Kolb supporters to pay no taxes, thus refusing to support such a corrupt government, and asked President Harrison to enforce the clause in the Constitution guaranteeing to each state a republican form of government.¹¹⁴

Taking time by the forelock, General Field, candidate for Vice-President of the People's party met at Cullman in a monstrous convention of the State Alliance, August 9. It was claimed that 63 out of 66 counties were represented. Speaking and picnics were the order of the day.¹¹⁵ General Field, being introduced by Mr. Adams, "delivered a very good Democratic speech," but denounced Cleveland. J. C. Manning, of the Alabama People's party, attributed the current distress to contraction of the currency by the Republicans, but the Democrats were unable to prevent it, and both old parties must step aside for the People's party. They would be deluged in November and there would be no resurrection. After General Field's speech Gaither called up the Blues and the Grays and introduced them to the General, thus burying the tomahawk of 1865. From Cullman, Field went to Birmingham to speak with Gaither and Manning.¹¹⁶ The latter had recently been rotten-egged in Florence because he was a Populist.

Bowman, the incomparable, made his usual incendiary harangue charging fraud and ballot box stuffing, and contended that Jones would not have fourteen members of the next legislature. He spurned the idea of 'Compromise,' and would give notice of a state convention in September, to put out delegates for Congress and elect them by a great majority. Although this was an Alliance meeting, advertised to deal with non-political matters, none of the speakers scarcely touched the subject of the Alliance. President Adams in a two-hour speech criti-

¹¹³ *Advertiser*, Aug. 26, 1892.

¹¹⁴ *News*, Aug. 14, 1892.

¹¹⁵ *News*, Aug. 10, 1892.

¹¹⁶ *News*, Aug. 10, 1892.

cised the old parties and said the Alliance would keep in the middle of the road, that it was non-partisan, but not non-political in every sense.¹¹⁷ Gaither, Chairman of the executive committee of the People's party and high brow among the branch of Alabama Populites who were not ashamed of their name, introduced Kolb as the next governor—"if he had a fair count."¹¹⁸ Kolb said he had carried all the white counties but four; that he had carried Montgomery county by 2,200 although Jones claimed it by 6,000, when every intelligent person knew the county had not over 4,000 votes. He claimed the large vote represented negro votes never cast.¹¹⁹ It was a frequent charge that the votes cast surpassed the census figures! Mr. Kolb, asking if the people were going to stand for him to be counted out of 45,000 votes and the governorship, received a firm reply of "No, no, no."¹²⁰ Resolutions were read publicly endorsing Weaver and Field. Some hesitated to give up the Democratic party, but Kolb said he was as good an Allianceman as anybody and he endorsed the Third party.¹²¹ Two years later he said he voted for Weaver in 1892 and had thanked God on his knees every night since because he had voted against Cleveland.¹²²

The Cullman convention adopted¹²³ a most significant yet bitter set of resolutions repeating that by fraud and partisan committees the people's will had been stifled, that patience having ceased to be a virtue, "the people" had held their own convention and named the people's candidate but he had again been counted out. They now declared themselves "independent of the old tricky machine" (the Democratic party). Other resolutions renewed allegiance to the Ocala demands, denounced the state administration and scored Cleveland as a gold bug

¹¹⁷ *News*, Aug. 12, 1892.

¹¹⁸ The Alliance elected these officers: B. W. Groce, President; Merrill of Randolph, Vice-President; S. M. Adams, State Lecturer; etc. (*News*, Aug. 12, 1892).

¹¹⁹ Governor Jones and also J. W. DuBose rather satisfactorily disprove this charge. But it is much juggled. (DuBose, Article No. 113, in *Jones Scrap Book*, V, p. 107; DuBose, Article No. 114, in *Jones, Scrap Book*, V, p. 108.)

¹²⁰ *News*, Aug. 12, 16, 1892; *Advertiser*, Aug. 6, 1892; DuBose, Article No. 113, in *Jones, Scrap Book*, V, p. 107.

¹²¹ *News*, Aug. 12, 1892.

¹²² *Advertiser*, Jan. 21, 1890.

¹²³ *News*, Aug. 12, 1892.

tied up with Wall Street, and asked all who loved liberty to help defeat him in November.

Kolb's next step was to make good the threat in his Welch letter, not in name, but in fact, by forming an open alliance with the People's party. He had virtually said that by pretending to be a Democrat he would carry with him a large element which would not follow him under the name of a Third party. "Just wait till this fight is over," i.e., till after the August election.¹²⁴ It was not till the middle of August, two weeks after the election, that Kolb crossed the "Rubicon," making good his previous threat by fusing with the People's party.¹²⁵ At Birmingham a meeting of the Jefferson county executive committee of the People's party and also of the Kolb or Jeffersonian executive committee was held August 16. Here they agreed to fuse, all enemies of the regular Democracy wishing to defeat it. The first organized bolt at Greenville, eight months before, had now become state-wide with a coalition of all opponents of straight Democracy. It was agreed to call a Jefferson county convention, September 10, to select delegates to a state convention at Birmingham, September 15.

The Democratic press pictured this as the final act in the conspiracy—"the major crime of 1892"—i.e., the coming together of the Kolb bosses and Third party leaders, openly declaring their hostility to Democracy. They were to be aided by "the Lily White" Republicans, led by Dr. R. A. Mosely as opposed to the Bill Stevens (colored) non-fusion faction.¹²⁶ The plan was to turn over to the national Republican party the Alabama electoral vote and Congressmen. The joint executive committees agreed on Birmingham as headquarters of the Kolbite-Alliance-People's party and they agreed to have a paper as the party organ.

The significant fact, however, of the coalition of the Kolb and Manning parties, in which they were to try to win a common battle over the old party, was that the

¹²⁴ *Advertiser*, July 16, 1892; *News*, July 25, 1892.

¹²⁵ *News*, Aug. 17, 1892; *Advertiser*, Aug. 18, 1892.

¹²⁶ *Advertiser*, Aug. 17, 18, Sept. 17, and Oct. 18, 1892. William J. Stevens, prominent colored politician, formerly of Selma, now of Anniston, a tonsorialist, was chairman of the Republican State Committee and would not give in to "Boss" Mosely's faction trying to fuse with the Kolbites. Bill said the idea that the negro should not push to the front was in the language of Senator Ingalls, "an iridescent dream." (*Age-Herald*, Nov. 4, 1891; *News*, June 17, 39, 1892, March 25, 1892; *Age-Herald*, June 6, 1893.)

Kolb faction being the stronger, virtually absorbed the Manning group and waged battle under the attractive shibboleth of Jeffersonians rather than under the name of Populists. For going over to the Kolb group, Manning was denounced as a traitor by some who wished to remain free from either wing of the Democratic party. But there was after all no complete harmony between these two groups. Each had its bosses and offices were too few for them not to be rivals at times.¹²⁷

The Third party convention met at Lakeview Hotel, Birmingham, September 15, with two or three thousand people present. The old charges of fraud were reiterated. General Weaver, Mrs. Weaver and Mrs. Lease had been busy in Alabama several days and were at this convention and spoke.¹²⁸ Presidential electors and nine candidates for Congress were named.¹²⁹ Another significant event of the Jeffersonian-Populist convention was the adoption of the Omaha People's party platform, with a few local planks, as "a fair vote and a fair count" and opposition to Cleveland. Could Kolb longer insinuate that he was not a Populite after fusing with that party and adopting the national platform of the People's party?

The substance of the Kolb-Magee "bargain" to give Alabama to Weaver and Harrison was said to be that Kolb should select nine Congressmen, subject to Mosely's approval, six of these to be from the Kolb faction and three from the Mosely group. Chris Magee of Pittsburg, representing the National Republican Committee, was to furnish Kolb the money who was to secure anti-Cleveland electors.¹³⁰ As much as \$200,000 was reported to have been turned loose in Alabama by "Boss" Magee on his many visits.¹³¹ He later¹³² said he was given only \$10,000 to use in Alabama¹³³ and couldn't do anything with so small a sum. But there was a scramble for the spoils from Boss' "barrel." Magee superintended the printing

¹²⁷ *News*, Sept. 17, 1892; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312.

¹²⁸ *Advertiser*, Sept. 16, 1892; *News*, Sept. 16, 1892.

¹²⁹ *News*, Sept. 16, 1892; *Advertiser*, Sept. 16, 1892; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 311. 1. Dr. W. J. Macon of Monroe, first district; 2. Frank Baltzell of Montgomery; 3. J. F. Tate of Russell; 4. A. P. Longshore of Shelby; 5. W. W. Whatley of Clay; 6. John M. Davis of Fayette; 7. W. M. Wood of Cullman; 8. Rev. R. T. Blackwell of Jefferson.

¹³⁰ *Advertiser*, Sept. 18, 1892, July 12, 1894.

¹³¹ *News*, Oct. 31, Nov. 1, 2, 11, 1892.

¹³² *News*, Nov. 11, 1892.

¹³³ *News*, Nov. 1, 2, 1892.

of the election tickets in Pittsburg and they came addressed to "The Collector of Internal Revenue, Montgomery, Alabama."¹³⁴

Just as Manning had been rotten-egged at Florence, the leader being, as he said, the chairman of the local executive committee, so Kolb and several other candidates on the Lakeview ticket were egged and forced to quit speaking at Gordon, Henry county. Kolb and S. S. Booth, swore out warrants at Montgomery and sent United States marshals to arrest the egg dispensers and take them to Montgomery for trial before a United States Commissioner presumably on the charge of throwing away eggs!¹³⁵ Democratic papers called it "force bill stuff." Judge S. T. Frazier and Circuit Clerk A. H. Pickett of Union Springs and others were also taken to Montgomery and hounded considerably before Federal marshalls for alleged violation of the election laws, in that they were charged with failing to appoint managers from more than one party.¹³⁶ It was pronounced a game of intimidation for political purposes on the eve of the national election.

Not only were the Populite-Kolbites against Cleveland, but many others in Alabama opposed his currency and tariff policies. The masses wanted silver and some thought Cleveland had deserted their interests for the East and Wall Street.¹³⁷ Many David B. Hill clubs were formed in Alabama before the Chicago convention nominated Cleveland and Stevenson.¹³⁸ Too, the industrial area of the state with Birmingham as the center, wanted tariff protection which Cleveland opposed. The *Age-Herald* was against Cleveland, while the *News* and the *Advertiser* were strong for him. Governor Jones pronounced Cleveland the greatest living statesman, and four years later supported the gold standard Democratic faction.¹³⁹ Senators Morgan and Pugh were strong silver men, and both lost out temporarily with the *Advertiser* because they fought Cleveland's money policy. While Morgan was losing favor with the *Advertiser* on the cur-

¹³⁴ *Advertiser*, Oct. 30, 1892.

¹³⁵ *News*, Oct. 23, 1892; *Advertiser*, Oct. 25, 1892.

¹³⁶ *News*, Oct. 13, 1892; *Advertiser*, Oct. 11, 12, 15, 25, 1892.

¹³⁷ *Age-Herald*, Feb. 23, 1891; *Advertiser*, July 25, 1891, July 9, 1892; *News*, April 15, 1891, *News*, June 8, 1892.

¹³⁸ *News*, Feb. 2, 25, 1892, March 16, 1892; *Advertiser*, July 24, 1891, Feb. 12, 1892.

¹³⁹ *News*, Feb. 2, 1892; *Age-Herald*, July 22, 1891.

rency question, he was also being criticised by the *Age-Herald* as being out of date because he was against a tariff.¹⁴⁰

Fourteen of Alabama's twenty-two votes in the Chicago¹⁴¹ convention had gone for Cleveland. The cry became "Cleve and Steve"; "Don't grieve after Cleve and Steve; they're a-coming."¹⁴² As the *Calera Journal*¹⁴³ put it: "Get aboard the Old Ship Democracy, and take a trip to victory. Cleve is the Captain and Steve First Mate." This prophecy was true. The Republicans had no ticket, hence the Jeffersonians and the new People's party combined were nominally the only rival of the Democrats,¹⁴⁴—not counting the Bill Stevens faction which had named Harrison delegates and Congressional candidates.

November 8 proved a Democratic "landslide," a triumph for "Cleve and Steve," overwhelming Harrison and the "Force Bill,"¹⁴⁵ and Alabama Democracy had a love feast. The popular vote in the state stood:¹⁴⁶ Cleveland, 138,123; Weaver, 85,128; Harrison, 8,387; General Bidwell, 239; total 231,877.

Cleveland's majority over Weaver was 52,995. The state's vote fell over ten thousand short of the August vote (242,483). It has been contended that this fact tends to show that Republicans and all opponents of Democracy voted for Kolb in August, and that only a comparatively small Democratic vote which supported Kolb in August followed him to Weaver in November for the Republican strength was estimated at over 40,000.¹⁴⁷ Cleveland received a majority in 51 counties.¹⁴⁸ Nine Democratic Congressmen were elected,¹⁴⁹ and all of the

¹⁴⁰ *Advertiser*, June 14, 1892; *News*, Dec. 3, 1891; *Advertiser*, July, 2, 25, 1891; *Age-Herald*, March 31, 1891; July 22, 1891. Cleveland and Morgan were warm personal friends but held opposing views on currency. (*News*, June 28, 1892; *Age-Herald*, Sept. 8, 1892).

¹⁴¹ *News*, June 22, 1892; *Advertiser*, June 22, 1892.

¹⁴² *News*, June 22, 1892.

¹⁴³ Quoted in *News*, Aug. 18, 1892.

¹⁴⁴ Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312; *News*, July 22, 23, 1892.

¹⁴⁵ *Advertiser*, Nov. 9, 1892, *News*, Nov. 10, 11, 21, 1892.

¹⁴⁶ *Advertiser*, Jan. 21, 1892; *News*, Nov. 21, 1892; *News*, Nov. 13, 16, 1892; Owen, *Alabama*, II, p. 1149.

¹⁴⁷ See *Advertiser*, Jan. 21, 1896; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312; *News*, Nov. 21, 1892; *Advertiser*, Aug. 2, 1894.

¹⁴⁸ *Advertiser*, Nov. 15, 1892.

¹⁴⁹ Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312, *Advertiser*, Feb. 23, 1894; *News*, Nov. 10, 1892; *Advertiser*, Nov. 22, 1892. See also *News*, May, 8,

electoral votes were for Cleveland, whose total electoral vote was 277 as against 145 for Harrison, and 22 for Weaver.¹⁵⁰ The latter received 1,041,577 popular votes. No other Third party candidate since the Civil War has made so good a record.¹⁵¹ Gaither said Weaver¹⁵² should have received a much better vote in Alabama had not so much of the negro vote gone to the Democrats. He insinuated that intimidation and persuasion caused them to support the Democrats.

The general assembly¹⁵³ met November 16, and the governor's message touched upon the educational, convict and taxing systems, the desirability of constitutional amendments, changes in the election laws, etc. The majority of the members were Democrats, with several of the opposition in the lower house. A unique coincidence was the election of two black-belt men,—both from Dallas county—as leaders of the general assembly. Attorney Frank L. Pettus was made speaker of the house and Senator Crompton president of the senate.¹⁵⁴

A large number of important matters were considered. After a hot fight, a garnishment law was passed,¹⁵⁵ and a radical change was made in the state convict system, carrying out the Democratic platform. The A. D. Sayre election law, a kind of Australian ballot system was passed after much discussion.¹⁵⁶ The law provided a kind of educational qualification, following, as many averred, the new Mississippi constitution (1890) for disfranchising the negro. Although Kolb, Goodwyn and the Populists in general had demanded a more rigid election law, they now burst forth with all their fury in criticism of this "first start toward a free ballot and a fair count."¹⁵⁷ The opposition claimed that this drastic Bourbon measure would disfranchise 40,000 negroes.

1892; Feb. 5, 1892; April 30, 1892; *Advertiser*, Sept. 7, 8, 29, 1892. J. F. Stallings, elected for District 2, had been nominated over his opponents Wiley and Tompkins on the 1001th ballot. (*Advertiser*, Sept. 28, 1892).

¹⁵⁰ Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 266.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *News*, Nov. 11, 1892.

¹⁵³ *News*, Nov. 17, 18, 1892.

¹⁵⁴ *News*, Nov. 16, 1892.

¹⁵⁵ *News*, Dec. 9, 1892; *Advertiser*, Jan. 6, 1893.

¹⁵⁶ *Advertiser*, Jan. 18, 1892; Feb. 19, 1893; *News*, Dec. 26, 1892, Feb. 17, 1893.

¹⁵⁷ *Advertiser*, Feb. 17, 1893; July 18, 1893; *News*, Feb. 17, 1893; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 313; *Advertiser*, April 12, 1893; *Age-Herald*, July 17, 1893.

An acriminious fight ensued over the advisability of a constitutional convention whereby the hide bound document formed in 1875 might be so changed as to allow the state to develop in all respects.¹⁵⁸ All agreed that changes were needed but many doubted the wisdom of stirring the question now. Speaker Pettus introduced a bill which after long, slow sledding was killed.¹⁵⁹ Especially did the Populists oppose any attempt to change the constitution because it would cost too much money and be only an effort to rob the negro of his vote.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ *News*, Jan. 8, 22, 1893; *Advertiser*, Jan. 1, 18, 1893.

¹⁵⁹ *Advertiser*, Jan. 20, 22, 24, 29, 1893; *Age-Herald*, Jan. 28, 1893; *Advertiser*, Feb. 7, 1893.

¹⁶⁰ *Advertiser*, Jan. 1, 1892, quoting *Mobile Register*. Notwithstanding the opposition of Senators Morgan and Pugh, as well as six of the Congressmen to Cleveland's currency policy, all being against the repeal of the silver purchase clause of the Sherman Act, the President honored the state by selecting Congressman H. A. Herbert as Secretary of the Navy and Hannis Taylor as Minister to Spain. (*Advertiser*, Aug. 8, 11, 24, 1893; *Age-Herald*, Sept. 30, 1893, Dec. 2, 1893, Oct. 11, 31, 1893, Nov. 2, 1893. *Advertiser*, April 7, 1893).

CHAPTER VI

POPULISM RAMPANT (1894-'96)

TWO INAUGURATIONS, 1894

If periods of economic distress ordinarily provide fertile soil for political and social unrest the early 'nineties were no exception to the rule. The year 1893, though an off year in elections, was essentially a "panic year" throughout the nation,¹ and like the three preceding years it was to be important in Alabama politics in that plans were being formulated for the biennial upheaval of 1894. For three full years Alabama had been at boiling point politically. The people were worn out, yet the papers pleaded in vain for a quiet year.² Jones had triumphed twice, and the two-term precedent had been upheld. Incidentally he had fought the battle of true Democracy against all odds, state and national, and had by his victory saved the Democratic party in Alabama.³ Despite rumors that he would resign to accept the vice-presidency of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, he served out his full term.

Who would succeed him? What would the several political factions do in the next election? And what was to become of Captain Kolb?

As has been seen the Jeffersonians and "pure" Populites, plus the "Lily White" Republicans, stood with shoulders together in the national election of 1892—divergent as their sincere aims may have been.⁴ Under two names the state executive committee of the Jeffersonians and their "twin double, the Pouplists," met in convention in Birmingham,⁵ May 11, 1893. Captain A. T. Goodwyn acted as chairman of the Jeffersonians and George F. Gaither as chairman of the Populites. The call of the two conventions was in similar language. All the notables were present. Kolb was busy mixing with both parties.⁶ I. L. Brock of the *Alliance Herald*, Secretary

¹ Brown, *Alabama*, p. 315; *Advertiser*, Feb. 6, 1895.

² *Advertiser*, March 5, 1893; *News*, March 6, 1893.

³ *News*, Jan. 18, 1893; *Advertiser*, Jan. 13, 1893.

⁴ *Advertiser*, May 12, 1893.

⁵ *Age-Herald*, May 12, 1893.

⁶ *Advertiser*, May 12, 1893.

of the Farmers' Alliance, was there, as were Zell Gaston, youthful Manning, with his "large white hat and unlimited confidence", B. K. Collier, A. T. Goodwyn, P. G. Bowman, Jerry Fountain, Philander Morgan, S. M. Adams *et al.* Gaither told a reporter that they had met to map out campaign plans for the next year—that they were "stronger than ever" and that by getting an early start they would win the election. He said they had many probate judges and other prominent men in their group. Lacking a quorum the Populist committee held no formal session but apparently sanctioned most of the Jeffersonian committee.⁷ This committee proposed a primary election for April 2, 1894, in which Populites, Jeffersonians and Democrats were all to participate.⁸ The chief features of this plan which Chairman Goodwyn was authorized to submit to the regular Democrats with a view to harmony, were: 1. A state primary election to be held in April, naming a full ticket for the August election. 2. the participation of all white electors regardless of their past affiliations; and 3. opposition to all legislation which might limit white suffrage. This meant opposition to the Sayre ballot law. The negro, for whom they professed much concern, seems to have been left in the cold. This proposition was to be open forty days.⁹

What would be the attitude of the Democrats? Was harmony desired? On the answer to these questions hinged the state's peace, harmony and welfare. As was to be expected the *Advertiser* ("Grandma") readily objected. The offer was a scheme insincere, not to be accepted, no means of identifying Democrats, too autocratic. The state Democratic committee was called together in Birmingham, June 5, by Chairman A. C. Smith.¹⁰ The 18 members present declined the Goodwyn proposition of May 12. Harmony was desired but the committee were unwilling to admit to primaries those who had been fighting the party.¹² The committee was willing to leave out the state election of August, 1892, and make the national election of November the test. That is, the test was whether one had voted for "Cleve

⁷ *Advertiser*, May 13, 1893.

⁸ *Age-Herald*, May 12, 1893.

⁹ *Advertiser*, May 13, 1893.

¹⁰ *Advertiser*, May 13, 1893; *Advertiser*, May 20, 1893.

¹¹ *Advertiser*, June 6, 1893.

¹² *Ibid.*

and Steve." Strife and disfranchisement of masses of the whites were denounced.¹³ The *News* feared this plan would engender continued discord and was willing to allow in the primaries all who claimed to have been Democrats before 1892. The summer of 1893 was spent see-sawing over what constituted a real Democrat. The Jeffersonians submitted a second proposition identical with that of the *News*.¹⁴ This proposal was also turned down by the Democratic committee which refused to alter its previous decision which opened the door to all Democrats. Those who supported Cleveland in 1892 were eligible to vote in the primaries, any any others would be welcomed back to vote for the nominees.¹⁵

The opposition was already busy a year in advance of the election. The Populist state convention had been called by Gaither to meet at Calera, July 4, to name state candidates¹⁶ and formulate plans. Jeffersonians and Populist groups, the former under Chairman Goodwyn, held numerous meetings during the summer at some of which Congressman Bankhead of the sixth district and Congressman W. H. Denson, "Red Rooster" of Etowah of the seventh district, participated, for which they were almost read out of the Democratic ranks.¹⁷ Captain Kolb took part in most of these meetings and before the year closed said he had recently visited more than fifty counties and was stronger than ever and would win in 1894.¹⁸ Many of the Jeffersonians however were inclined to favor a new and hence a stronger candidate rather than support Kolb, self-constituted, perpetual racer.¹⁹ Whitehead's *Living Truth* of Greenville and the Lowndes *Pioneer* both came out openly against Kolb in favor of Philander Morgan of Talladega, "cranky brother" of John T. Morgan. "Phil" had been on the Weaver-Harrison ticket in November. It was reported that Gaither and Goodwyn were at loggerheads and that the two branches of Populists would not steer their courses together. As for Manning, "Boy Evangelist," who had now prepared a forty page pamphlet—"Politics in Alabama"

¹³ *Advertiser*, June 9, 1893.

¹⁴ *Advertiser*, Sept. 8, 1893, *Age-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1893.

¹⁵ *Age-Herald*, Oct. 12, 1893; *Advertiser*, Oct. 13, 15, 1893; *Advertiser*, April 27 and July 22, 1893.

¹⁶ *Advertiser*, June 9, and Jan. 10, 1893.

¹⁷ *Advertiser*, July 8, 13, 22, 1893; *Age-Herald*, July 7, 19, 1893.

¹⁸ *Advertiser*, Dec. 24, July 4, May 11, 1893; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 11, 1893.

¹⁹ *Advertiser*, Oct. 20, Nov. 15, and Dec. 28, 1893.

—he would not think of harmony²⁰ with the Democrats.

Kolb would certainly be the opposition candidate. Who would oppose him? Many urged harmony by naming a "farmer governor" and prominent names were mentioned, as A. C. Davidson of Uniontown, James Crook of Anniston, and J. M. McKelroy, of Anniston.²¹ Soon the race in the Democratic party pointed to Congressman W. C. Oates of Ozark, "one-armed hero" of the Civil War, and Captain J. F. Johnston, Birmingham, also severely wounded in the Civil²² War.

The state Democratic executive committee on January 22, had set May 22 for the state convention in Montgomery,²³ and instituted the significant plan for holding all primaries, beat meetings and county conventions on the same day throughout the state. May 12 was set as the day for county primaries and beat meetings, and May 16 for county conventions. County committees could decide which plan they wished for selecting state delegates. Congressional delegates were not to be selected till after the state election was over in August. The convention was to have 504 delegates instead of 466 in 1892, based now upon population rather than the vote for governor at the preceding election.²⁴ This basis of representation not only aided the white counties but helped to equalize representation in the black counties. The conglomerate opposition had already met in Birmingham November 16, an discussed plans for their state convention²⁵ and urged renomination of the ticket of 1892, headed by Kolb. The big Jeffersonian state convention was held in Birmingham, February 8. Captain Goodwyn called the meeting to order, but Zell Gaston became permanent Chairman and Gaither Vice-Chairman (thus fusing Jeffersonian and Populite), after which Judge Sam Hobson spoke, saying the party was not a baby but was 99 years old, that Jefferson was its father, and its mother was the Constitution!²⁶ He then set forth his political philosophy. P. G. Bowman ranted again. O. L. McKinstry of Pickens nominated R. F. Kolb for gov-

²⁰ *Advertiser*, April 27, May 24, and Oct. 1, 1893; Feb. 9, 1894.

²¹ *Age-Herald*, June 23, and Dec. 3, 8, 9, 17, 1893; *Advertiser*, Jan. 13, 18, 1893.

²² *Advertiser*, June 29, July 2, Aug. 7, 1893 and Jan. 4, 13, 1894.

²³ *Advertiser*, Jan. 23, and Dec. 24, 1894.

²⁴ *Advertiser*, Jan. 27, and Feb. 11, 1894.

²⁵ *Age-Herald*, Nov. 11, Jan. 19, 21, 1894.

²⁶ *Advertiser*, Feb. 2, 1894.

ernor, and the crowd stood cheering for two minutes. S. M. Adams was named for commissioner of agriculture, J. P. Oliver of Tallapoosa for superintendent of education, etc.

The platform included, in addition to planks of the Omaha convention, a demand for a state contest law, twice recommended by Governor Jones.²⁷ Convicts were to be removed from the mines; miners were to be given the same benefits as other laborers and their wages were to be paid in lawful money and semi-monthly; demanded the creation of the office of inspector of weights and measures and election of a mine inspector, and prohibition of working children under thirteen in the mines; and invited capital to develop Alabama resources.

The simon-pure Populite convention in session at Birmingham accepted an invitation to join the Jeffersonians. A. P. Longshore presided over the Populite group. Some of them were tired of Kolb and would steer clear of the Jeffersonians. Manning brought the sympathy of General Weaver who urged them to vote for Kolb (cheers). Manning said if the South and West would unite they could sweep the country from the Potomac to California, and if they could carry the solid South the Republicans of the North would come with them. If they would carry Alabama, he predicted that the national ticket would be headed by Stewart (Nevada) and Kolb. He said many threw up their hats for Cleveland the year before but now they had no hats to throw up. Cleveland was pronounced the greatest enemy of the present age, saying "Nero fiddled while Rome burned; Cleveland goes fishing at Buzzard's Bay, while pain and starvation rage. And Ben Harrison shoots ducks while women and children cry from hunger." "Like tired hounds," said this political novitiate, "we cling at the feet of Plutocracy and Democracy." He cried for Liberty or Death, saying amid "hurrahs for Kolb" that "Kolb is our Patrick Henry. Kolb, the immortal Kolb. His name will go down in history as Washington's did. As one man let us unite with the Jeffersonians and go with them to victory," (wild cheers).²⁸ On Manning's motion every delegate

²⁷ *Advertiser*, Feb. 9, 1894. Bill Stevens, Chairman of the State Republican Committee, in conference at the same time and place, entered the Jeffersonian-Populite convention, but was forced to make a hasty escape.

²⁸ *Advertiser*, Feb. 9, and 10, 1894. J. C. Manning's *Politics of Alabama* was on sale.

arose favoring going with the Jeffersonians who at that moment were entering the same hall for their meeting.²⁹

It was claimed that Kolb no longer tried to conceal the fact that he relied much upon Republican headquarters for financial aid,³⁰ that he had in fact become the real Republican boss in Alabama,³¹—"Kolb, the Alabama Mahone."³²

Captain Kolb kept Senator Hoar and other Republicans fully informed of the 'crimes' and 'frauds'. Kolb was considered the one agency through which the solid South could be broken. Mr. Hoar endeavored through the Home Market Club of Boston to raise \$5,000 for Kolb's use³³ in turning Alabama to the Republicans. They were, so the Democrats said, to aid Kolb in electing a legislature which would select a U. S. Senator favorable to protection.³⁴

The people were worn threadbare with biennial elections and a continual political upheaval for four years. Despite some sectional talk over candidates, the vital question with the Democrats was: "Who can beat Kolb?" Both Johnston and Oates had announced their candidacy in January.³⁵ No others entered the field. Both were good timber. Johnston's views on silver were more favorable than Oates', however Johnston had offended many Alliancemen by making Jones' election possible in 1892. Furthermore Oates had the *Advertiser* behind him. One great relief this time was that the election machinery by rule of the executive committee had been greatly simplified—beat primaries,³⁶ May 12; county conventions, May 16; state convention, May 22.

²⁹ See also *Advertiser*, Feb. 16, 18, 1894. Brown, *Alabama*, p. 316. Judge Whitehead and J. B. Ware were strong contenders for pure Populism. Whitehead said there was almost universal sentiment at the Birmingham meeting for the Jeffersonians to go into the Populist camp straight after the next election. (*Advertiser*, Feb. 9, 1894.) The *Advertiser*, March 1, 1894 said the Third party was well named. It consisted of one-third Republicans, one-third political soreheads, and one-third disappointed office seekers.

³⁰ *Advertiser*, June 20, 1894.

³¹ *Advertiser*, March 4, 31, 1894.

³² *Advertiser*, March 17, 1894, quoting *LaFayette Sun*, said "Kolb always takes up a collection. You pay your money and see the show!"

³³ *Advertiser*, June 5, and July 25, 1894.

³⁴ *Ibid.* The *Advertiser* carried a fine cut showing Kolb with a beaver hat, box in hand, marked "Solid South". Kolb is handing in bills in exchange for the "Solid South". (*Advertiser*, July 25, 1894; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 290.)

³⁵ *Advertiser*, Jan. 20, 21, 27, 1894.

³⁶ *Advertiser*, May 24, 1894.

Thus all the worry would be over inside of ten days. Election returns showed Oates would have 271, Johnston 233 delegates,³⁷ although Johnston also claimed the fight. Action of the county conventions instructing delegates confirmed the returns of the primaries³⁸ and all the state convention needed to do was to meet, announce the vote of the delegates as instructed by counties, pronounce its platform, and adjourn.³⁹ The state convention did its work in one harmonious day instead of the usual tortuous week.⁴⁰ The platform endorsed the state and national administrations, urged the repeal of the 10 per cent tax on state banks, better schools, a better convict system, commended the Sayre election law, and urged all voters who believed in the principles of Democracy and good government to unite with them in an effort to elect the state ticket.⁴¹ After considerable quibbling the convention adopted John B. Knox's resolution recommending the re-election of Senator Morgan.⁴² The latter now toured the state speaking for the Democratic party and won back temporarily the praise of the *Advertiser*.

In spite of Kolb's alleged desperate and high handed methods of actual intimidation in some instances,⁴³ the vote on August 6 stood thus: 109,160 for Oates; 83,394 for Kolb, Oates' majority⁴⁴ being 25,766. Kolb had lost over 14,000 from his vote of 1892.

The *Advertiser* rejoiced that "Populism has run its race in Alabama."⁴⁵ Three times in succession it had been beaten after the most desperate efforts.⁴⁶ Even now Kolb claimed 18,000⁴⁷ majority and continued to cry

³⁷ *Age-Herald*, June 27, 1914; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 316.

³⁸ *Advertiser*, May 16, 17, 20, 23, 24, 1894.

³⁹ *Advertiser*, May 26, 1894.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Advertiser*, May 20, 1894.

⁴² *Advertiser*, May 26, 1894. The *Advertiser* was now fighting Morgan because of his silver policy. (*Advertiser*, April 21, 25, 29, 1894; *Advertiser*, July 15, 22, 27, 1894.)

⁴³ *Advertiser*, July 12, Aug. 4, 1894. It was common, during the campaign of 1894 to see the people come together from miles around in wagons filled or covered with oats or corn cobs indicating their favorite candidate. At times Kolb himself rode through the streets, as at Talladega, upon a cob-covered wagon amid the throat splitting yells of thousands of sons of toll. (*State Herald*, July 22, 1896).

⁴⁴ *Advertiser*, Aug. 19, 7, 8, 1894.

⁴⁵ *Advertiser*, Aug. 19, 1894.

⁴⁶ *Advertiser*, Aug. 8, 1894.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Kolb had boasted that he would carry Henry county and Abbeville, Oates' home beat. But the vote stood: for the

'fraud.' He intimated resistance and called a conference of his men for August 8, to decide their next move.

All congressional⁴⁸ primaries were held, under the new plan, on August 25, and congressional conventions on September 4. Unusual interest developed in some of the primaries.⁴⁹ The conventions named nine candidates, eight of whom favored Cleveland's policies. Six old members were renominated. M. W. Howard, Populist, was elected in the seventh district over W. H. Denson, now accused of being a Populite. Both were quondam Democrats.⁵⁰ The congressional vote, November 6, was only 72,538,—a loss of 65,741 from the August⁵¹ vote. Only three counties—Bullock, Lee and Randolph—cast more votes in November than in the state election. Alabama was surfeited with politics.

The general assembly⁵² convened in biennial session November 13. On the preceding day Captain Goodwyn and other Kolb friends had held a public meeting in Montgomery to discuss plans, but it passed off without a definite program for seating Kolb. A Democratic caucus was held on the night of November 13 and decided that a Democrat was a *genus homo* who had voted for a Democratic Congressman at the ensuing November election and who himself voted for Oates or had favored Oates

county, Oates, 1991; Kolb, 1619; in Abbeville, Oates, 200; Kolb, 82. This was not so creditable to Oates. But, Eufaula, Kolb's home beat, gave Oates 1424 to Kolb's 15!

⁴⁸ *Advertiser*, Aug. 25, July 4, 1894.

⁴⁹ *Age-Herald*, Sept. 4, 1894.

⁵⁰ *Advertiser*, Sept. 5, Nov. 3, 1894; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 28, Dec. 13, 1894. Although the 'organized' Democratic candidates for Congress were favored with election certificates by Governor Oates, there were numerous contests, and some of the Democrats lost in the contests. In the fourth district W. F. Aldrich, Republican coal mine operator of Shelby won in a contest over Congressman Gaston A. Robbins of Dallas who had taken his seat. Captain A. T. Goodwyn Populist or Jeffersonian of the fifth district won in the contest over James E. Cobb, anti-Cleveland Democrat. M. W. Howard, erratic literary Populist of the seventh district defeated Congressman W. H. Denson, "Game Cock of Etowah". While T. H. Aldrich, Republican of the ninth district, brother of W. F. Aldrich of the fourth, won in the contest against Oscar Underwood, already seated. Thus Alabama's Congressional delegation stood: Senators Morgan and Pugh, for free silver; R. H. Clarke of the first and P. Harrison of the third district, successor to Oates, goldbugs; two Republicans were elected on the fusion ticket; and three were free silverites.

⁵¹ *Advertiser*, Nov. 24, 1892.

⁵² *Age-Herald*, Nov. 14, 1914; DuBose, Article No. 123 in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914.

as against Kolb.⁵³ When this rule was announced ten senators, representing twenty-two counties, only one less than one-third the entire senate, left the room. Captain Goodwyn was one of them.⁵⁴ This same caucus named Francis L. Pettus of Dallas, a silver man as president of the senate. The Oates faction had little desire apparently to break with the Johnston faction. Oates was more nearly with President Cleveland on currency matters. The lower house organized the next day by naming Thomas H. Clark of Montgomery, an extreme sound-money advocate, as speaker with Colonel Sam Will John of Dallas, a Johnston man, as speaker *pro tempore*.

Clark was the caucus nominee and won in the house by 63 votes against 34 for Joseph H. Hawes, Populist, of Chambers county.⁵⁵ Jeffersonian-Populists constituted almost a third of the membership of each house. The senate had 24 Democrats, 8 Populites and 1 Republican.⁵⁶ In the house fully a third of the 100 members were Populists.⁵⁷

On November 17 a joint session of the houses was held for counting and publishing the votes of the August election. Captain Goodwyn led the opposition for the Kolb forces but Oates was declared the nominee⁵⁸ by a majority of 27,582, and the whole Democratic ticket for state offices was declared elected.

Governor Jones' farewell message to the legislature was wise and constructive. He urged substitution of a definite salary in lieu of the haphazard yet dangerous fee system used in many of the offices.⁵⁹ The state had been compelled to borrow money, but was not in so bad a condition as some pictured it. The deficit for the year ending September 30 was \$364,354. This was due to the experiment begun in 1889 of reducing the tax rate until it reached four mills while at the same time appropriations were increasing. The balance in the treasury had gradually shrunk since then until the state now had an

⁵³ DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914; *Acts*, 1894-5, p. 18.

⁵⁴ DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914.

⁵⁵ DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 14, 1894; *Acts*, 1894-5, p. 10.

⁵⁶ *Age-Herald*, Nov. 14, 1894; DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914.

⁵⁷ DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914.

⁵⁸ DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 20, 1894; *Advertiser*, Nov. 18, 1894.

⁵⁹ *Age-Herald*, Nov. 16, 1894.

annual deficit. The anticipated increase in property valuation had not kept pace with the increased expenditures for education, the convict system and other purposes. Taxes due on railroads in the hands of receivers could not be collected. Everything considered—the panic, the extra cost for state troops on strike duty and the imperfect taxing machinery—the governor was delighted that the deficit was no greater. He urged improved assessment methods, recommended the appointment of a state board of assessment and equalization to reach the property escaping assessment; a half mill should be added to the tax rate; a board of arbitration for workmen should be established, boycotting suppressed by law and additional safeguards should be thrown around the ballot box.

Considerable anxiety was in evidence as to what the Kolb forces might undertake on inaugural day. In a two-day session at Birmingham, August 8 and 9, two days following the state election, Kolb's combined cohorts had issued a "manifesto" signed by Skaggs, Chairman of the Central Campaign Committee; A. T. Goodwyn, Chairman of the Jefferson Executive Committee and John W. Pitts, Chairman of the People's Party Committee, from which these excerpts are quoted:⁶⁰ "The condition in this state has reached a climax. There's no doubt that the state ticket headed by Captain R. F. Kolb has been elected. The alternative is presented of submitting to wrong, insult and robbery, or to assert the sovereign power, before which thrones totter, scepters fall, and the outrages of tyrants cease."

General meetings of Kolb's followers were ordered under cover of a pretended protest against lawlessness. Although their action was on the verge of treason and incendiarism they did not advise lawlessness. Mass meetings were called for August 23, and it was rumored that they would establish a dual government, with a Populist legislature of their own, and with Kolb as governor. Several bills were introduced in Congress demanding an investigation of election frauds in Alabama, even though it was a state election. Governor-elect Oates said, "Let them investigate."⁶¹

Signs of disturbance were not lacking. Kolb and his son Reuben set up the *People's Tribune*, an afternoon paper published in Birmingham, fighting Cleveland's

⁶⁰ *Advertiser*, Aug. 10, 15, 1894.

⁶¹ *Advertiser*, Aug. 10, 15, 1894.

money policies. It gained state-wide circulation. Kolb's claim that he had beaten both Jones and Oates but had been counted out created wide sympathy among the people. There was no law for contesting the case, however. Many of his adherents wished to take control of the capitol for Kolb, although both Jones and Cleveland would favor Governor Oates and protect⁶² him. Kolb's "Manifesto" to the people appeared in the *People's Tribune*, November 19, saying he would be sworn in as governor on December 1, "by the Grace of God." Governor Jones, however, said Oates had been elected and would be inaugurated. Kolb urged his friends to be in Montgomery December 1 where he would take the oath of office. He spoke of "my seat as Governor."⁶³ The *Tribune* said the chief issue of the last state campaign was honest elections, i.e., a free vote and a fair count, that the election frauds of 1892 had set aside the people's will and no one denied it; that the people had demanded that it be not repeated, yet the monstrous frauds of 1894 had again defeated the people's will. November 17, Captain Goodwyn and 42 other Populist members of the legislature protested to the joint house and senate convention against the counting of votes in fifteen black-belt counties due to fraud but Speaker Pettus ruled the protest out of order.⁶⁴

Once before, 1872, bayonets had flashed in the state capitol. Then there were two legislatures—a Democratic "capitol legislature," and a Republican "courthouse legislature."⁶⁵ The dozen or so Kolb papers in the state at the time urged peace and no demonstration. Northern papers were also alarmed. Some of these, saying it was a result of the efforts to clean up rotten elections, urged orderly procedure.⁶⁶

Inauguration day, December 1, arrived, and Alabama had two governors! William C. Oates was sworn in by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as Alabama's Chief Executive.⁶⁷ He made an elaborate address urging especially the laws for contesting elections. On the same day Kolb and his friends were to carry out their inaugural program. The oath was to be taken on the front

⁶²DuBose, Article No. 122, in *Age-Herald*, June 27, 1914.

⁶³*Age-Herald*, Nov. 20, 1894.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 288.

⁶⁶*Age-Herald*, Nov. 25, 1894.

⁶⁷DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914; *Age-Herald*, Dec. 1, 1894.

porch of the capitol, but if prevented there, in Dexter Avenue near the capitol.⁶⁸ Captain Kolb and the other men who had run on his ticket in August were sworn in by a justice of the peace.⁶⁹ Kolb on foot then started for the capitol followed by the other officers just "inaugurated" and a crowd. Kolb was refused permission by Adjutant General Harvey E. Jones, "in uniform," on duty at the capitol, and also by retiring Governor Jones, from making an inaugural speech from the capitol front. Governor Jones said one inaugural ceremony was all they could have at the capitol in one day. Kolb and his followers then went across to Bainbridge Street in front of the capitol, halted "a two-horse wagon" and after prayer by the Reverend Mr. Hearn, Populist member of the legislature from Choctaw county—asking divine guidance of him about to be inaugurated as governor—addressed the throng.⁷⁰ He said he had taken the oath of office to emphasize the real conditions in Alabama, the enormity of election crimes. He would do all he could to have laws passed to set aside Oates' election, yet he advised moderation. Some urged that the matter be taken to the courts to see who should be governor, but cotton was at about four cents a pound and they had no money. One of the loudest and most incendiary supporters of Kolb was Dr. C. B. Crowe of Bibb county who persisted in backing "Governor Kolb" with volunteer soldiers.⁷¹ The crowd, apparently quite in sympathy with Kolb in this fiasco, dispersed as the wagon carried "Governor Kolb" down the street.⁷²

In a letter to the legislature from Mr. Kolb signed "R. F. Kolb, Governor," December 3, he said he was elected governor August 6, 1894, and had taken the oath as governor *de jure* but was prevented from exercising his powers as such.⁷³ He made no threats to the legislature but urged the passage of an election contest law, and

⁶⁸ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 1, 1894; *Advertiser*, Dec. 12, 1894.

⁶⁹ DuBose, Article No. 123, in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914; *Age-Herald*, December 2, 1894; *Advertiser*, Dec. 1, 1894. Thousands of people in the state habitually addressed Captain Kolb as "Governor" until the time of his death a decade ago.

⁷⁰ DuBose, Article No. 123 in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914, Dec. 2, 1894; *Advertiser*, Dec. 1, 1894; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 290.

⁷¹ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 2, 1894; DuBose, Article No. 123 in *Age-Herald*, June 28, 1914.

⁷² *Age-Herald*, Nov. 30, 1894. Kolb was urged to beware else his might be the fate of "Governor Dorr" of R. I. in 1842.

⁷³ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 5, 1894.

urged his friends to organize in clubs to demand such relief. He advised them to pay no taxes to tax collectors for a while, and advised tax collectors to delay paying taxes into the state treasury until an impartial hearing was had under a fair and honest contest law. Upon the legislature, said "Governor Kolb," rested the question of peace or discord in Alabama. It was the only body to declare the governor and also to pass laws.⁷⁴

Governor Oates' message was in many ways similar to that of the retiring executive. He favored maintaining the state's credit, urged an increased tax, equalization of taxes, increase of liquor licenses, appointment of a board of assessment, "a succession tax," and licensing of all corporations. Governor Oates also recommended that the August election be changed to November, to save expense, and favored a contest election law, a banking law in view of the possibility of a repeal of the 10 per cent tax on state bank issues, and a "mansion for future governors." He thought freight rates could be regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission, since the state commission possessed only police power.

It is interesting to note that the legislature,⁷⁵ composed of many able men, enacted a large number of the laws called for by the messages of the two governors. Several strong Grange and Alliance members doubtless had an important part in the bills passed, especially those regarding education. There were already four district agricultural schools with experiment stations; five more were now added.⁷⁶ Changes were made in the vexatious convict system;⁷⁷ the tax rate was increased. A backward step was taken by the repeal⁷⁸ of the law of 1887 prohibiting women, and also children under fourteen, from working in factories more than eight hours a day. Oates was accused of failing to enact tax legislation to curb the "banks, corporations and monopolies."

⁷⁴ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 4, 1894. Colonel Sam Will John, speaker *pro tem* of the house, introduced a resolution, referred to the committee on rules, to instruct the committee on privileges and elections to ascertain which members of the legislature participated in the attempt to inaugurate Captain Kolb.

⁷⁵ *Acts*, 1894-5, p. 581. There was lack of harmony among the rather new set of legislators, who split into three factions—the Oates sound-money men; Johnston "silver loons"; and Kolb "traitors."

⁷⁶ *Acts*, 1894-5, p. 581.

⁷⁷ *Acts*, 1894-5, p. 163, p. 849; *Age Herald*, Dec. 19, 1894.

⁷⁸ *Acts*, 1894-5; *Age-Herald*, Dec. 19, 1894.

What to do with Senator J. T. Morgan was one of the embarrassing questions confronting the legislature of 1894-5. Morgan had opposed Cleveland's money views and was said to favor Johnston over Oates for governor.⁷⁹ The *Advertiser* had been criticising Morgan, and the charge was made even by H. E. Taubeneck, Chairman of the National Executive Committee of the People's⁸⁰ party that Senator Morgan had "dickered" with the Populites and agreed not to help Oates, but was to denounce the national administration and clamor for a free count and free silver.⁸¹ At first Kolb was considered the choice of the Populists for Morgan's seat in the U. S. Senate, despite the opposition of Gaither and Whitehead.⁸² Later they schemed to defeat Morgan and elect W. S. Reese of Montgomery. Every one knew the legislature would not refuse to return Morgan, who had boldly toured the state in the recent election—it being his habit to come back among his constituents at least every sixth year.⁸³ Yet Oates' supporters wanted to do something. They tried in vain to get Jones, also Congressman Richard H. Clarke of Mobile, Cleveland man, to oppose Morgan. Many charged⁸⁴ that Oates' candidacy for governor was merely a blind to conceal his aspiration to succeed Morgan in the Senate.⁸⁵ Morgan had announced in a speech at Birmingham that the Republicans would give Kolb \$100,000 for a legislature that would "defeat Tompkins, myself or some other good Democrat to the U. S. Senate."⁸⁶

On a strictly party vote, the ballot in separate houses stood 61 for Morgan in the house against 35 for Reese; in the senate it stood 23 for Morgan and 9 for Reese.⁸⁷ Colonel Reese, a cotton planter, once Mayor of Montgomery, even sold his plantation to contest in the U. S. Senate his defeat by Morgan, but the latter was seated.⁸⁸ He thought the Populists would have been in the majority

⁷⁹ DuBose, Article No. 124, in *Age-Herald*, June 29, 1914.

⁸⁰ *Advertiser*, Nov. 20, also 22, 1894.

⁸¹ *Advertiser*, Nov. 21, 1894; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 21, 1894.

⁸² *Advertiser*, Jan. 2, 1894; *Age-Herald*, Nov. 21, 1894.

⁸³ DuBose, Article No. 124, in *Age-Herald*, June 29, 1894.

⁸⁴ *Advertiser*, April 13, 1894.

⁸⁵ *Advertiser*, July 19, 1894.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Age-Herald*, Jan. 28, 1894; DuBose, Article No. 124, in *Age-Herald*, June 29, 1914. Morgan remained in the Senate 30 years from March, 1877 until his death in June, 1907. (DuBose, *Alabama*, pp. 305, 360; *Age-Herald*, June 29, 1914.

⁸⁸ DuBose, Article No. 124, in *Age-Herald*, June 29, 1914.

in the legislature except for frauds, and contested on that basis. He held an election certificate signed by Kolb and others.⁸⁹

Oates' attitude on many of the basic questions in national affairs was not that of his party in the state.⁹⁰ In the special session of congress in 1893 he stood for Cleveland and squarely against the two Alabama senators and six representatives on the repeal of the silver purchase clause. Oates, a "sound-money" man, was elected over Johnston, a "silver" man; yet in 1896 the sound-money Presidential ticket (Palmer and Buckner) carried no county and probably only one beat in the entire state.⁹¹ Money was the big issue in 1894, for Cleveland was charged with being on the Republican platform in currency matters. This was the year of "General" Coxey's march upon Washington, of the Pullman strike,⁹² a year of low prices, business stagnation and general distress, and the electors were not in sympathy with conditions on the money question. Eastern capitalists are said to have refused to lend money to the governor because of the free silver plank in the Democratic platform.⁹³ The silver men were not satisfied with Oates and some who had voted for him, as Daniel S. Troy, a lawyer of Montgomery in 1895, vehemently urged that election methods be changed. He was for the white party and had voted for Oates, but said the election in his (Montgomery) county in 1894 was a farce.⁹⁴ The negro vote, the *bete noire* of the system, it was contended, had been brought back into prominence by the Republican party, dominated from outside the state, and that no real cure could come till a new constitution was adopted⁹⁵ curtailing negro suffrage under the guise of legality. The negro, himself a victim of circumstances, was less culpable than the unscrupulous whites who used his power for selfish ends. It can not be said that the negro was at all to blame. He got no benefit from the procedure but was used as a make-weight. He was a tool, a pawn, for which the white parties contested, and the negro, more than any other

⁸⁹ *Age-Herald*, Dec. 20, 1894.

⁹⁰ DuBose, Article No. 122; *Age-Herald*, June 27, 1914.

⁹¹ DuBose, Article No. 122, in *Age-Herald*, June 27, 1914.

⁹² Ten men were killed in a coal miners' strike in northern Alabama in 1894. (J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 351.)

⁹³ J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 295; *Age-Herald*, June 11, 1895.

⁹⁴ DuBose, Article No. 122 in *Age-Herald*, June 27, 1914.

⁹⁵ *Age-Herald*, Jan. 30, 1895.

factor, was responsible for the Populist party in Alabama. Economic questions fell into the background.

By 1894, with the revised election law in effect—and there was nothing seriously defective in the law, the trouble being in the manipulation of the law—there was little excuse for a continuance of Populism. It had raged four full years, yet the people were still in ferment. By 1894 “the oath bound secret order—the Farmers’ Alliance”—the vehicle through which the insurgent populace (populism) was translated into political action (Populism), and the chief factor in support of Kolb against Jones in 1892, “had virtually disappeared from the field.”

THE BATTLE FOR FREE SILVER, 1896.

The year 1895 was characterized by several incidents of unusual interest, notwithstanding it was not an election year. There were already signs of business recuperation. “Daylight is breaking,” and “the outlook brightening,” observed one paper.⁹⁶ This was evidenced in the proceedings of the Alabama Commercial Association which met in Birmingham in April.⁹⁷ The state participated in the great Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta where Dr. Booker T. Washington, America’s greatest negro—Principal and founder of Tuskegee Institute, Alabama—delivered a famous address.⁹⁸ On account of the reduced tax rate in the late ’eighties, Governor Oates, like his predecessor, had to borrow money to meet the state’s debts, but the public credit was good.⁹⁹

The Populists continued their activities. By now it seems they hardly knew what should be their next step. There was division in their own ranks on the currency question, and all was not peaceable between them and the Republicans. On January 24,¹⁰⁰ “Governor” Kolb dispatched another strong “message” to the legislature asking for a law to punish usurpers. He reiterated that he was elected but through force Oates had been seated. He was “still deprived by the seizure of the purse and sword of the state” of his office, and urged the passage of a law for contesting the recent gubernatorial vote. It

⁹⁶ *Age-Herald*, March 13, May 21, Oct. 2, 1895; *Advertiser*, Nov. 11, 1895.

⁹⁷ *Age-Herald*, April 10, 1895.

⁹⁸ *Age-Herald*, Aug. 28, 1895; *Age-Herald*, Aug. 7, 1895.

⁹⁹ *Advertiser*, August 20, 1895; *Age-Herald*, March 30, 1895.

¹⁰⁰ *Age-Herald*, Jan. 30, 1895; see *Advertiser*, July 5, 1895.

can not be said that the legislature ignored the "Governor's message," since it passed a state contest act in February.¹⁰¹ Captain Kolb, present¹⁰² in Birmingham, March 12, at the meeting of the state executive committee of the People's party, repeated his "lament." He said Oates was in office by fraud and force, and should call a special session of the legislature to test the election of all incumbent state officers. He had promised his supporters that if they would elect him, he would be seated, but he alone was helpless, for Cleveland would support Oates with Federal troops. Already, he said, a hundred thousand voters had petitioned Congress to re-establish a Republican government in Alabama.¹⁰³

The all-absorbing issue now before the people of the state and nation was the money question. Papers were filled with "silver and gold" discussions. "Free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the ratio of 16 to 1" could be heard from every country school house and mountain side for the next two years. "*Coin's Financial School*" and "*Coin's Financial Fool*" were terms familiar to all.¹⁰⁴ A knowledge of the science of economics and public finance, such as is supposed to be attained in colleges, was by no means essential¹⁰⁵ for the orators of 1895-'96. As the famous¹⁰⁶ evangelist, Sam Jones said, "the silver craze is both epidemic and endemic The less brains a man has the more he clamors for full and unlimited coinage." It was a fine opportunity for the demagog with his panaceas.

Governor Oates was a hard-money man, and said Alabama, because of its stand on the money issue, had a higher reputation among eastern capitalists than any

¹⁰¹ *Advertiser*, Feb. 12, 16, 1895. The only vote against the bill in the senate was by a Populist.

¹⁰² *Advertiser*, March 13, 1895.

¹⁰³ See *N. Y. Tribune*, Feb. 2, 1895 on "Black Belt Exposures"; *Age-Herald*, Feb. 2, 1895.

¹⁰⁴ *Age-Herald*, May 21, 1895; *Advertiser*, April 19, 1895. "*Coin's Financial School*," an illustrated free silver catechism by W. H. Harvey, played a big part in the coming "battle". It sold like "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

¹⁰⁵ *Age-Herald*, August 28, 1895. Jones said "the greenback-sub-treasury calamity howlers were now clamoring '16 to 1'."

¹⁰⁶ The Phrase "free silver" smacked of a free lunch and was "catchy". The story ran that the people in one hill county, learning that the Government was going to issue "free" silver, held a meeting and appointed an agent of approved honesty to receive it and divide it equally among them! (*State Herald*, May 31, 1896).

other southern state.¹⁰¹ The *Advertiser* and the *Age-Herald* were, for once, almost together in their opposition to the "16 to 1" fallacy, however the former was always the more radical. It claimed that a large majority of the state press was against unlimited coinage of silver.¹⁰⁸ "Free Silver" clubs and leagues were organized; silver conferences became numerous; and agitation was even made for the organization of a silver party in Alabama.¹⁰⁹

The ever-recurring question of "who'll be the next governor?" began early to occupy the people's attention. Political aspirants were free to express their views on "free silver." Mr. Bryan visited Mobile and joined in a hot debate on "16 to 1" against Congressman Richard H. Clarke, gold standard, Cleveland protege.¹¹⁰ In the spring of 1895 the *Age-Herald*, opposed to free silver, became the *Birmingham Daily State*, favoring free silver. It was under the control of Captain J. F. Johnston,¹¹¹ and began to boost Johnston as the people's choice for governor. A sharp fight developed between the *State Herald* and the *Advertiser* (Gold Bug) over the currency question, hence over potential candidates. The latter charged that the *State Herald's* scheme of trying to fuse silver Democrats with Populists was opposed by the latter and would fail.

Oates had more than once said he wanted only one term and then wished to succeed Senator Pugh at Washington. Clarke and Johnston were said to have similar ambitions.¹¹² The *Advertiser* (Clarke's phonograph), was fighting Senator Morgan, free silver advocate, as well as Johnston,¹¹³ charging them with catering to the Populists. Evidences were not lacking that there would soon be wide rifts in the 'regular,' true blue Democracy caused by the currency question. Truly, politics makes

¹⁰⁷ *Age-Herald*, May 21, 1895; *Age-Herald*, June 11, 1895.

¹⁰⁸ *Advertiser*, April 27, 30, July 16, 1895; *Age-Herald*, July 17, 1895.

¹⁰⁹ *Advertiser*, March 31, 1895; *Advertiser*, June 4, 1895.

¹¹⁰ *Advertiser*, Jan. 30, 1895; July 2, 1895; *State Herald*, July 5, 1895; April 1, 1896. DuBose, "Bryan in Alabama", in *Age-Herald*, July 16, 1914.

¹¹¹ *Advertiser*, April 13, and Oct. 4, 1895; *Advertiser*, May 19, 1895; July 6, 23, 1895; *Advertiser*, Nov. 23, 1895; *Age-Herald*, July 12, 1914.

¹¹² Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321; *Advertiser*, August 8, Nov. 10, Dec. 12, 1895; J. W. DuBose, "Troublous Questions", in *Age-Herald*, July 5, 1914.

¹¹³ *Age-Herald*, August 11, 28, 1895; *Advertiser*, Feb. 21, 1896.

strange bed fellows. Ex-Congressman Denson of Gadsden was now a rampant¹¹⁴ "silver loon." Except Clarke and Harrison, Alabama's delegation in Washington were silverites.¹¹⁵

By Christmas, the outlay was rather clearly shaped so far as the Democrats were concerned. The *Advertiser* said, November 22, that it was authorized to announce that Oates would not offer himself for re-election. The next day Captain Johnston announced his candidacy in the *State Herald*, Johnston's personal organ.¹¹⁶ This journal¹¹⁷ urged "Toleration, Moderation, Salvation."

The *Advertiser* accused Johnston of hanging to Morgan's coat tail, and said Johnston could not harmonize the party.¹¹⁸ Signs pointed to R. H. Clarke—"Blue Eyed Dick"—as Johnston's opponent, although some thought it would be a sacrifice on his part.¹¹⁹ A bitter fight would ensue if these two men contested. Within a few days,¹²⁰ Clarke announced¹²¹ his candidacy; he was called "the *Advertiser's* candidate." Many urged joint debates between the candidates but the plan was discarded¹²² "in the interest of the party."

Johnston had made the race twice. In 1890 he ran far ahead of all candidates except¹²³ Kolb. He was strong in the primaries in 1894 and lost by only 39 votes in the convention. He had always supported the Democratic nominee. Now, he, as well as many people, thought his time had come. He believed the National Democratic Convention would declare for bimetallism, and that Oates' sound-money group would bolt the party platform and the national ticket. Johnston now favored "open bars," i.e., letting back into the party all who would stand by the Democratic party, and this plan was adopted by the executive committee. This included many who favored Kolb in 1894 against Oates.¹²⁴ Partisan feeling soon ran high, with speakings and meetings everywhere, especially

¹¹⁴ *Advertiser*, Oct. 19, 1895.

¹¹⁵ *Advertiser*, May 19, 1895 and Jan. 31, 1896.

¹¹⁶ *Advertiser*, Nov. 11, 23, 1895.

¹¹⁷ *Advertiser*, Dec. 11, 1895.

¹¹⁸ *Advertiser*, Dec. 1, 1895; Nov. 24, 1895.

¹¹⁹ *Advertiser*, Dec. 11, 12, 1895; *Ibid.*, Jan. 11, 1896.

¹²⁰ *Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 12, 1896; *State Herald*, Jan. 1, 4, 1896.

¹²¹ *Advertiser*, Feb. 22, 1896.

¹²² *State Herald*, Jan. 29, 1896.

¹²³ *Age-Herald*, June 11, 1895; July 12, 1914; *Advertiser*, March 28, 1896; *State Herald*, Jan. 15, 22, 29, 1896.

¹²⁴ DuBose, Article No. 126, *Age-Herald*, July 27, 1914.

by Congressmen and Senators. It became a battle royal between the sound-money¹²⁵ group,—the “Gold Bugs” or Cleveland “Cockatoos” and the “Silver Loons.”

The Presidential election of 1896 was the big goal ahead, hence the nation was keenly interested¹²⁷ in the Alabama campaign for its election would come off first, and all wished to see how the state stood on the one big question—currency. It was charged that Cleveland's stand for gold had played havoc with Alabama, now so thoroughly divided. Johnston was accused by the *Advertiser* and Clarke with injecting this national issue into Alabama politics.¹²⁸

In February both candidates “took the field” in the campaign and “the hottest Democratic” contest in fifty years was on.¹²⁹ In beat primaries¹³⁰ held on April 11, delegates were chosen to the state convention¹³¹ for April 21. A majority of the state executive committee¹³² was for Johnston.

Johnston received about two-thirds of the delegates in county conventions and Clarke the other third,¹³³ and the state convention merely recorded the people's wishes, Johnston receiving 356 against 147 for Clarke.¹³⁴ In his acceptance speech he plead for party harmony, saying that all wanted sound money and that there was only a difference of opinion¹³⁵ as to the means of obtaining a sound currency. His enemies were the enemies of the party.

Many charges¹³⁶ of “fraud” in the primaries, said to be detrimental to Clarke's candidacy, were now made by the *Advertiser* which had in previous years heaped scorn on the Populists for fraud stories. It was claimed, too,

¹²⁵ *Age-Herald*, July 12, 1914; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 290.

¹²⁶ A huge bimetallist conference had met at Birmingham in September last. (*Age-Herald*, Sept. 16, 1895.)

¹²⁷ *Advertiser*, March 28, 1896; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, p. 169; *State Herald*, April 29, 1896.

¹²⁸ DuBose, Article No. 129, in *Age-Herald*, July 19, 1914.

¹²⁹ *Advertiser*, Feb. 17, 1896.

¹³⁰ DuBose, Article No. 128; *Advertiser*, Feb. 8, 10, 21, 1896.

¹³¹ *State Herald*, Jan. 29, and Feb. 12, 1896.

¹³² *State Herald*, Jan. 29, 1896; *Age-Herald*, July 19, 1914.

¹³³ *State Herald*, April 29, 1896; see *State Herald*, Feb. 26, 1896.

¹³⁴ *State Herald*, April 29, 1896; *State Herald*, April 22, 1896; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 293.

¹³⁵ *State Herald*, April 29, 1896.

¹³⁶ *Advertiser*, April 13, 1896; *State Herald*, April 18, 1896.

that Johnston's nomination was due to his loyal service¹³⁷ in the past and that it was not a test of the popular opinion on the money issue. Others asserted¹³⁸ that it was a "16 to 1 convention," that the candidate¹³⁹ of the "masses" had triumphed over that of the "classes."

The Democrats now launched their plans for the August election. The Populists were an enigma; their alignment was doubtful. This was both a help and a hindrance to the Democrats. They did not as yet know the opposition candidate, nor how strong he would be. But they used every effort to win back all "vacillators" who had supported Kolb in a lukewarm fashion.¹⁴⁰ It was believed that thousands of them were now ready to return to the Democratic ranks. There were numerous evidences of such prospects.¹⁴¹

April 28, one week¹⁴² after the nomination of Johnston, according to plans formulated January 28, the Populists and Republicans met in separate conventions in Montgomery. The Republicans, as usual, were divided in their own ranks. The "Lily Whites" were headed by R. A. Mosely and the "Black and Tans" by Bill Stevens (colored). Kolb, Congressman Howard, A. T. Goodwyn, A. S. Hobson, and Dr. G. B. Crowe were prominent Populist attendants.¹⁴³ The paramount question was as to whether the Populists and Republicans would fuse to defeat "red-headed" Joe Johnston. After considerable wrangling the Republicans ironed out their differences and a full Populist-Republican ticket was announced with Captain A. T. Goodwyn of Elmore as "standards" bearer for governor.

The Stevens-Vaughn faction of the Republican convention, supporting McKinley, had finally¹⁴⁴ been persuad-

¹³⁷ *State Herald*, April 29, 1896. The Convention declared for free and independent coinage of silver. The gold men asked for representation among the delegates named for the Chicago convention. An instructed delegation was named.

¹³⁸ *State Herald*, April 29, 1896.

¹³⁹ *State Herald*, Feb. 12, 1896.

¹⁴⁰ *State Herald*, May 6, 1896.

¹⁴¹ "Like a great floodtide, a large army of honest men are coming back to the Democratic fold." (*Roanoke Leader*, May 17, 1896.)

¹⁴² DuBose, Article No. 130, in *Age-Herald*, Jan. 29, July 21, 1914.

¹⁴³ *Age-Herald*, July 21, 1914.

¹⁴⁴ *State Herald*, May 6, 1896; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321. The leaders of each party denied that they had "fused" but said they were "co-operating". (*Advertiser*, May 13, 1896.)

ed by the Populists to fuse in the next state election. The convention had been in continuous session thirteen hours, when at 5 A.M., April 29, it was agreed that the Republicans would "coöperate" with the Populists, if the latter would nominate J. W. Smith of Birmingham for Attorney-General and L. F. Grimmet of Macon for Secretary of State. After a five-hour wrangle on April 29 the Populists accepted the candidates named, and the party platform of 1894 was reaffirmed.¹⁴⁵ Goodwyn's appeal for fusion is said to have won out.¹⁴⁶

Thus Kolb had been shelved, and the Populists were to ride or drive a new steed. But the tactics were the same as during the preceding six years. All of the old complaints were re-emphasized¹⁴⁷ by members¹⁴⁸ of this "Unholy Alliance." Captain Goodwyn made his campaign on the cry of "frauds in the black belt." The Democratic press likewise scored the opposition whose plans were, so they said, now an open card, and meant that Alabama was to be given over to the negro-Republican party. Both factions baited the voters.¹⁴⁹

The Chicago National Democratic Convention nominated Bryan and Sewall for President and Vice-President, respectively.¹⁵⁰ The Populist National convention at St. Louis endorsed Bryan and named Thomas E. Watson of Georgia for Vice-President.¹⁵¹ McKinley and Hobart were then nominees of the Republican Convention¹⁵² at St.

¹⁴⁵ DuBose, Article No. 130, in *Age-Herald*, July 21, 1914; *State Herald*, May 6, July 8, 1896. "The Pops and Rads met, mixed, and mugged;" or "Fussed, fought and fused."

¹⁴⁶ *State Herald*, May 20, 1896.

¹⁴⁷ *State Herald*, May 20, 1896.

¹⁴⁸ *State Herald*, May 13, 27, 1896; June 24, 1896; *Advertiser*, July 11, 1896.

¹⁴⁹ *State Herald*, May 13, 1896. Seeing that the so-called "Jeffersonians" of other days were plain Populists or Republicans, and by no means Democrats, many publicly confessed they had been mislead through their support of the Alliance and Kolb, thinking him a Democrat, and were now eager to get back in the old party. Nor could they swallow the gold standard and tariff policies of the Republican party.

¹⁵⁰ *State Herald*, July 15, 1896; see W. J. Bryan, *The First Battle*, for an account of the Chicago Convention; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321.

¹⁵¹ *State Herald*, July 29 and Sept. 9, 1896; Latane, *Hist. of U. S.*, p. 427; Captain Kolb presided over the National Convention a portion of the time, and had a share in securing the endorsement of Bryan.

¹⁵² *Advertiser*, June 19, 1896; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321; DuBose, Article No. 131, in *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1914.

Louis. There was also a "Sound Money" or National Democratic ticket. The convention held at Indianapolis in September with 824 delegates from forty-one states, representing those who refused to swallow the Bryan free silver platform, nominated General J. M. Palmer of Illinois for President and General Simon Bolivar Buckner of Kentucky for Vice-President. This union of the Blue and Gray was supposed to be a piece of strategy to win votes,¹⁵³ similar to the Populite team of 1892.

The election¹⁵⁴ results in August show that the Democratic party in Alabama, under the head of Captain Johnston, had practically recovered from the discord that had separated it into two warring factions since 1890. Johnston received a vote of 128,541, getting the support of many Kolb men because of the silver issue,¹⁵⁵ and Goodwyn received 89,290. The black belt went overwhelmingly for Johnston, and he received many white counties which had gone for Kolb in the two preceding elections. A Democratic legislature was elected, each house, however having several Populists and Republicans.¹⁵⁶

True to prophecy,¹⁵⁷ under the leadership of the *Advertiser*, the "hard" money devotees in Alabama refused to accept the "Popocratic" platform of the Chicago convention. Sound-money conferences were held all over the state. "The *Advertiser's* Boltocrat" convention was held in Montgomery August 27, with representatives from 42 out of the 66 counties.¹⁵⁸ Many prominent men were there. Ex-Governor Jones was elected chairman of the convention.¹⁵⁹ Some others present were Congressmen G. P. Harrison and R. H. Clarke, Charles Henderson, later governor, S. H. Dent, F. P. Glass, J. H. Fitts, and E. L. Russell. A rousing platform was adopted, and delegates named for the Indianapolis convention. These men represented the most influential group¹⁶⁰ in

¹⁵³ *Advertiser*, Sept. 2, 4, 6, 1896; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321.

¹⁵⁴ *Advertiser*, August 16, Nov. 14, 1896; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 294; *State Herald*, August 5, 1896; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321.

¹⁵⁵ DuBose, Article No. 131; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321. Captain Goodwyn, beloved and respected Alabamian, now resides at Robinson Springs in Elmore county.

¹⁵⁶ DuBose, Article No. 131; *Advertiser*, Aug. 8, 1896.

¹⁵⁷ *State Herald*, March 25, 1896.

¹⁵⁸ *State Herald*, Sept. 2, 1896; *Advertiser*, August 25, 1896; DuBose, Article No. 131, in *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1914.

¹⁵⁹ *Advertiser*, August 28, 1896; *State Herald*, Sept. 2, 4, 6, 1896.

¹⁶⁰ *State Herald*, August 19, 1896; DuBose, Article No. 131 in *Age-Herald*, July 24, 1914. The leaders on the "national" ticket were from Birmingham, Eufaula, Montgomery, and Mobile.

the state, the group who had denounced and stemmed the tide against bolters and independents in 1892 and 1894.

Perhaps the most exciting¹⁶¹ election year in American history closed in November with the election of seven Democratic Congressmen, one Populite, and one Republican-Populite, and a victory for McKinley and the Republicans over the Democratic-Populist Fusion ticket led by Bryan. Alabama's electoral vote went to Bryan, the popular vote¹⁶² in the state being 107,137 for Bryan, 24,082 for Watson, 54,737 for McKinley and 6,464 for Palmer and Buckner, and 2,147 for Levering (Prohibition), a total of 194,567, which was 40,000 short of the Presidential¹⁶³ vote of 1892.

Populism in Alabama was a dead issue after 1896. Only 4,178 Populist votes were cast in 1900. This was somewhat over two per cent of the total vote. The insurgent movement had spent its force, henceforth all tendencies favored a return to normalcy. Johnston's election and re-election ultimately reunited the party.¹⁶⁴

REVIEW OF THE RISE OF POPULISM.

The foregoing story has been concerned with an account of the conditions in Alabama between 1870 and 1890. A close study of the history of the state and of the Populist movement in the state affords convincing evidence that no adequate conception of the whole agrarian crusade, culminating in Populism, can be had without a careful study and thorough understanding of the period of twenty years preceding the actual formation of a third party. These years contained the soil and the seed from which Populism sprang. Indeed, during these years the young plant, Populism—under a non-political name to be sure—sprouted and grew well-nigh to maturity. It was only left to the early years of the last decade of the century for this plant, already full grown, to change its name from a non-political farmers' organization (Alliance) to a political name (People's party).

It is now possible to restate the demands of the Alli-

¹⁶¹ *State Herald*, Nov. 4, 1896; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 362.

¹⁶² *Advertiser*, Nov. 4, 21, 1896; Berney, *Hand Book*, p. 538; *Official and Statistical Register*, 1903, pp. 235-6; Owen, *Alabama*, II, p. 1150. For the Gold Democrats, Montgomery county led with 526; Jefferson, 450.

¹⁶³ *Official and Statistical Register*, 1903, p. 238; Miller, *Alabama*, p. 297; J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 295.

¹⁶⁴ *Age-Herald*, July 27, 1914.

ance and likewise grasp more clearly the fact that these complaints—the justification for these demands—had their origin, not during the year 1890 but most surely had been cumulative over the entire score of years antedating 1890. Unlearned in the sciences of economics and politics, the farmers in their isolation could not fathom the causes leading to their complete undoing. Like the blinded adder, they struck furiously in all directions, considering all forces hostile to their interests. Notwithstanding the much boasted “Redemption of Democracy” of the middle ’seventies, which connoted the return of “White Supremacy,” all was not entirely well and right with Alabama.¹⁶⁵ An insecure lease on life under white domination was achieved but no one was ever certain as to when the “black ghost,” the exaggerated spectre of negro rule might again become a reality. Legally the negro’s political privileges equaled those of any white man.¹⁶⁶ And the very fact that the negro was now the make-weight—the balance between Democrats and Republicans—made his power dangerous, for it was logical for him to side with the Republicans to whom he owed his freedom. But this was not the major danger. The greater danger was that the Democrats themselves might split and the negro vote would indeed become a deciding factor. Fear of a return of negro-Republican domination (in part a shibboleth, a stereotype) held many discontented Democrats in line long after they had lost faith in the righteousness of their party. It was this fear which created such adhesive power in the Democratic party, despite the growing wrongs and desire for changes on the part of some of the whites. It was the gradual cleavage of and schism in the Democratic ranks that culminated in the Populist party.

The Constitution of 1875 was in many ways an improvement over that of 1868, yet it was not perfect. To say nothing of the biennial elections which kept the state in a continual political turmoil, the constitutional inhibi-

¹⁶⁵ A. T. Goodwyn, Personal letter, Sept. 4, 1924; Brown, *Lower South*, pp. 257 ff.

¹⁶⁶ Emmett O’Neal, *The Constitutions of Alabama*, p. 30; see Brown, *Lower South*, pp. 256 ff.

¹⁶⁷ In 1911 (*The Advertiser*, June 11) Governor B. B. Comer said the legislature and courts had been under control of corporations the last 30 years; and that the appointment of the railroad commission and the laws governing them were *vised* by railroad officials. See Judge T. S. Jones’ refutation in *Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1911.

tions regarding bond issues and credit became particularly vexing to the flourishing towns, which arose during the 'eighties, but became depressed after the 'boom.' They were unable to expand and develop for lack of power to increase their taxes, hence many complaints arose from civic leaders as well as laborers. The new election laws were soon found defective, and there was complaint against the state tax laws, the Federal 10 per cent tax upon state bank notes, the educational system, railroad abuses, the appointment of commissioners, and against corporations in general. With a plethoric Federal treasury the farmer could neither understand nor appreciate the inadequacy of the currency circulation.

Then there was bitter complaint⁷⁶¹ against the convention, the political boss, and Bourbon Democracy, the charge being current that notwithstanding the white voters of hill counties had rescued the whites of the black belt from negro domination¹⁶⁸ in 1874, these white counties had never since had their share of political influence in the state. It was a sectional issue of white county *versus* black belt. Then there was much dissatisfaction over the question of representation¹⁶⁹ in the legislature and state conventions, that the rotten borough system of England could never compare with that of Alabama, that the dozen black-belt counties with only a small white population had one-third the total number of delegates in the state conventions. The rapidly developing white counties should receive more consideration. Machine domination it was claimed made it impossible to nominate any but professional politicians. These are some of the causes which led the farmer to forsake his old party, in nearly all instances the Democratic party, and to resort to the fortunes of a new party. Never after 1870 was there thorough peace and harmony in the state. The redemption of 1875 was only nominal. It was one-sided and by no means universal. Democracy for the white blackbelter had been redeemed but by no means had the political power of the white county been on a parity with that of the black-belt county. If the negro's vote was to be stolen and counted out, why should his vote count in convention and legislature against the white counties? A latent determination to effect legal disfranchisement of the negro, who was now

¹⁶⁸ See Brown, *Lower South*, p. 248.

¹⁶⁹ Brown, *Lower South*, p. 248; *Advertiser*, March 18, 1874.

illegally disfranchised in violation of the spirit of the Civil War amendments, ran through the quarter century between the constitutions of 1875 and 1901. The animus, the *motif* for the "solid South," was brought over from the 'sixties and 'seventies and continued steadfast to the end of the century and longer.¹⁷⁰ The heinousness of ballot box stuffing, miscounting, bribery, vote stealing, fraud and "fixing" of conventions, which was said to have originated in the election of October 4, 1867, was so familiar that the breaking point—the disruption of Alabama politics—was not far remote. The fact that a streak or wave of independentism ran through the fifteen years previous to the outburst of the full-fledged Populist organization¹⁷¹ is adequate proof that Populism had its roots in this earlier period. This links clearly the abbreviated incidents of Chapter I with those of Chapters IV, V and VI.

During the 'seventies and 'eighties, as described in Chapters II and III, nominally non-partisan agricultural organizations developed to cope with the direful conditions. But from the very nature of circumstances, notwithstanding legislative favors shown the farmers, their organizations could not cure the ills, hence they resorted to politics. To quote a Populist¹⁷² Congressman and candidate for governor, "About 1890 the farmers in the West were burning corn for fuel; the result was the formation of the Farmers' Alliance throughout the West and South for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of such abnormal conditions and to find a remedy for them. After much discussion they concluded these conditions were *political*, consequently they nominated a Presidential ticket."

¹⁷⁰ Brown, *Lower South*, *passim*.

¹⁷¹ See Fleming, *Civil War*, p. 781.

¹⁷² A. T. Goodwyn, *Letter*, Sept. 4, 1924.

CHAPTER VII

THE PEOPLE'S PARTY PASSES

Populism had spent its force by 1896. Its energies had been dissipated. "The ball was over," and the next "step" for the Populites was to adjust themselves with reference to the wicked old parties which had weathered the storm. It was largely a matter of returning to the house of their fathers.

The year 1892 marked the climax of Populism in Alabama. The bubble had burst. Henceforth it was merely a repetition of the charges of fraud and supposed woes and grievances suffered by the "people" as against the "machine" and the "classes." Kolb's vote¹ in 1892 was 115,524 which was only 11,435 short of that of Jones, the victorious candidate for governor.

The enormously large vote of nearly a quarter million was counted for the two candidates that year. Against Oates in 1894, Kolb was given 83,283 votes,² a loss of 32,241 over 1892. Captain Goodwyn, standard bearer of the fusionists, composed again of all species of the opposition—"pure Pops", "Jeffersonians", and Republicans—received³ in the election of 1896 practically the same number of votes as Kolb had received in 1894. But 1896 was an unusual year in the annals of American politics and the Populist vote in Alabama that year was abnormally large, due to the political fervor throughout the nation over "The Battle of the Standards". After 1896 Populism played no noticeable part in the state.⁴

Why did the People's party⁵ pass? The answer to this question might vary with personal opinion. Much speculation enters, and it is no part of the writer's plan to enter into an elaborate discussion of the causes, func-

¹*Advertiser*, Jan. 21, 1896; Berney, *Hand Book*, p. 538; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 312.

²*Advertiser*, Jan. 21, 1896; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 316.

³*Advertiser*, August 16, 1896; Brown, *Alabama*, p. 321.

⁴J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, pp. 295, 298; Buck, *Agrarian Crusade*, pp. 172, 193-4.

⁵See Haynes, *Third Parties*, *passim*; Nixon, *Populist Movement in Iowa*, pp. 100-106; Delap, *Populist Party in North Carolina*, pp. 70-74; Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 225-28.

tions, achievements and shortcomings of third parties in general. Haynes, Woodburn, Schlesinger and others have done that task nobly.

The Populist party, being the culmination of a series of minor parties based fundamentally upon economic discontent, must of necessity vanish⁶ the moment those ills became ameliorated. More than one issue is necessary for a permanent party.

By 1896 there were numerous signs of a rising tide of prosperity. Wages and prices were advancing and the press prophesied that "hard times" would soon be a thing of the past. Even then many saw the futility of the cry for free silver and \$50 per capita.⁷ The farmers began to see new light, as did the towns in industrial centers which had been hard hit following the "boom era", but were now becoming adjusted and more level headed.

Populism was an insurgent, popular wave against class legislation and all kinds of corporate power. By 1896 Alabama legislators had gone far toward satisfying the demands of agriculture and industrial labor. Mine inspectors⁸ had been provided, the lien law repealed, scientific, diversified agriculture as well as general and technical education encouraged,⁹ railroads had been brought under fair control, the convict system—though the lease system continued—was improved, and laws too numerous to mention tended to pacify not only the Populists who had carried their appeal to the government for aid in behalf of the depressed working classes, but such laws appeased the people in general. Although the Sherman Federal Anti-Trust Act had reflected little credit as yet, and although the Supreme Court had¹⁰ declared the Federal Income Tax Law unconstitutional, there was still hope for relief, and Populism outside Alabama had also lost its propps.

It is often claimed that the Populist party failed

⁶*The Independent*, June 5, 1890; McVey, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁷*Age-Herald*, July 5, 17, 1895: "The sound of higher prices and wages stifles the cry of 'cheap money'. Facts, stubborn facts, are before us to combat false teaching." The coming of the Spanish American War, the discovery of new supplies of gold, etc., caused the "silver loons" to forget their lamentations.

⁸J. C. DuBose, *Alabama*, p. 351.

⁹Brown, *Alabama*, *passim*.

¹⁰*Pollock versus Farmers Loan and Trust Co.*, 158 U.S., 601.

partially for lack of efficient leadership.¹¹ This argument applies only in part to Alabama. The state has scarcely seen a shrewder, more forceful organizer, or more magnetic and persistent worker than Captain Kolb, the very essence of the Populist movement in Alabama. Although less heralded than Watson of Georgia, largely because Kolb was never quite able to land the plum, there is little doubt that "Genial Reuben" was in many ways a better and more tactful politician than "Tom." Nor was Kolb the only capable leader of the Populists, yet he stood head and shoulders above all others. Yet many of the other capable helpers, often lawyers, and non-Alliance men, were probably more of a liability than an asset. Kolb, as an Alliance leader, long identified with the farmers in various capacities, could wage a bold fight in behalf of farmers' rights, and yet keep disguised any sinister or personal designs or aspirations. His efforts were ostensibly in the interests of the needy and oppressed farmers. But the moment Taliaferro, Bowman, Skaggs and other lawyers and non-descript politicians joined the "Farmers' Crusade", there was room for suspicion, and this furnished good thunder for the "organized" Democracy.

As for the simon-pure Populists, they played a negligible role in Alabama politics. These familiar names stand out most conspicuously: "Evangel" Manning, Gaither, and Whitehead. Manning as founder of the pure bred species of Populism in Alabama was young, optimistic, ebullient, unstable. These men worked not too well among themselves and scarcely at all with the Kolb faction which always swallowed them as a bitter dose at election times.

A stranger reading the Alabama press of the Populist era (1890-1896) would scarcely be able to dissociate it from the party calumny and vituperation of the late reconstruction days. Like Rip Van Winkle, the negro had again been dragged into the forefront after a twenty years' sleep. And the Republican was also pulled forth from his hiding place and "cussed out and over" again. In one sense the period of the 'nineties was more dangerous, and called for louder "cussing" by the Democrats than in 1874. Although the political party in governmental control had been reversed since

¹¹ See Haynes, *Third Parties*, *passim*; Schlesinger, *New View-points*, p. 285; *Collier's*, Feb. 14, 1920.

1874, the paramount danger was now due to the schism among the Democrats themselves. This seriously threatened the Bourbon, machine group who maintained that they were saving the state and upholding the "Solid South" in all its purity and sacredness!

Not only was fusion by Democrats and Populists on free silver one cause of the decline of Populism, but fusion of Populists with Republicans was a real cause. Many former Democrats refused to swallow the conglomeration of 1896 and returned to their party.¹² Thus, grown tired of fusion, and especially balking at fusion with the Republicans, they deserted the Populists. And this was no inconsiderable source of its loss of power. It is safe to say that the days of Populism in Alabama were cut shorter because of activity of the Republican party of the state aided by the national organization. This outside interference crystallized sentiment among the dissident Democratic elements who now saw they must get together and "keep the home fires burning."

Populism thus became, in Alabama, primarily political. Economic woes were virtually submerged. The convention system, ordinarily dominated by the old-line politicians, unmatched in skill by the farmer group, together with the inequitable, rotten borough system of representation which was all in favor of the black belt, continued as a perpetual bone of contention between white and black counties. This kept the state

¹²*State Herald*, June 24, 1896. As put by one Popocrat, speaking of Tallapoosa county, before the election of 1896: "Without doubt the once giant Populist party of this county has lost its hold. The bottom has certainly fallen out . . . the 'Thing' has died a natural death, superinduced by Fusion and an overdose of bichloride of negro, hypodermically injected."

A typical letter regarding the attitude on fusion is that of J. W. Burdeshaw of Skipperville, Alabama, June 9, 1896: "In 1892 I left the Democratic party because I felt that we farmers had grievances against Democracy. I felt that we were oppressed and that we should hunt some party where we could redress our wrongs. I joined the Jeffersonians and worked with might and main for the success of the ticket headed by Capt. Kolb. Later on I joined the Populist party, and until a few weeks since I have been doing what I could honestly for the success of that party. When the Populist and Republican state conventions were held in Montgomery and these parties fused I decided it was time to call a halt. I could not follow the Republicans and couldn't stand the conglomeration. I will now support Johnston and the Democratic party." (*State Herald*, June 17, 1896).

divided sectionally and was a deterrent to possible progress. This rotten borough system had held over since 1874.

The negro's vote had indeed become an invaluable premium coveted by all parties. In 1874 the Democrats had scorned him and counted him *out*, even under peril of Federal troops. Now he was pandered¹³ to, and his vote was counted *in* (often at a geometrical ratio). More than one politician feathered his nest by manipulating fictitious negro votes in the black belt.¹⁴

Captain Goodwyn¹⁵ says, "The de facto governors of 1892, '94, and '96 were never elected by the people," that the election machinery "in the black belt was wholly in the hands of certain politicians, (and) the returns of elections were erroneously and corruptly reported." He contends that the 87,000 (*sic*) votes accorded him were known to be a majority of the votes cast.

Now a word as to the significance¹⁶ of the Populist movement in Alabama. There is danger of exaggerating its influence, because it is impossible to separate clearly the national and general results from the state and specific results—direct and indirect, mediate and immediate.

The actual tangible and immediate achievements of Populism in Alabama were small, but through the

¹³Arnett, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43; DuBose, Article No. 127, in *Age-Herald*, July 13, 1914. Election laws in Alabama had meant nothing for a quarter century. Things achieved under the guise of "elections" so-called, were done in the name of "political expediency." By 1896 many of the best citizens realized that the political orgy had gone already too far, and urged electoral reforms in earnest. Colonel Daniel S. Troy, Montgomery lawyer, was outspoken for fair elections, but his death put a temporary check on constructive electoral reforms.

¹⁴DuBose, Article No. 126, in *Age-Herald*, July 10 1904.

According to DuBose, Colonel Troy's figures showed that in 1894 Oates received 301 votes from Whitehall beat, Lowndes county, and Kolb none, whereas in fact only 17 votes were polled there. Precinct returns from all Lowndes county gave only 2,272 votes, yet the Lowndes county vote announced by the speaker of the house was 4,995 for Oates and 361 for Kolb. Returns from other counties harmonized as poorly with the votes announced.

¹⁵*Letter*, Sept. 4, 1924. Captain Goodwyn says a majority of 6,400 was returned against him in Dallas county when all well informed people knew that not over a thousand votes were polled in the county in 1896.

¹⁶See Nixon, *Populist Movement in Iowa*, pp. 71-74; Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, pp. 225-227.

Grange and Alliance as precursors of the Populist movement quite a deal of wholesome legislation, already cited, was enacted. These laws dealt particularly with the farmers' interests but were generally beneficial. The Populists, other than electing a fair number of legislators, seldom over one-third of the total in either house, and some two or three Congressmen, accomplished little in the way of putting their party in control. Captain Kolb claimed he was elected governor by 40,000 majority in 1892 and again in 1894, and Captain Goodwyn contends that he was counted out in 1896. But no Populist governor occupied the executive office at the capitol, notwithstanding "Governor" Kolb's inaugural and messages in 1894.

Popular opinion today is that Kolb was elected and counted out by the "bosses" of the machine. The author's figures do not bear out this conclusion. The "Populistic brigade" could not at once dethrone the machine, supported by the most influential papers in the state.¹⁷ Becoming, as it did, a question of the "solid South" and a choice between "white supremacy" and a third party, white supremacy won in the 'nineties as it had in the 'seventies. Hence Populism was sacrificed partly for white supremacy. To make sure that a similar danger might not again recur, the negro was virtually disfranchised by the constitution of 1901. This was an attempt to "legalize" what had been done illegally. Since 1901 there has never been heard the cry of "fraud", "black belt domination", and "unequal representation" in Alabama.

The political results have been good. The Australian ballot and primary election have supplanted the old, boss-controlled convention system. The people as a whole—due largely to the "revolution" of the farmers of the 'eighties and 'nineties—have come to be recognized as a legitimate part of the government. There is no doubt as to the educational value of the Populist movement. It was good schooling in democracy for a class which for full thirty years had had little direct

¹⁷See *Age-Herald*, June 18, 1913; Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 264, and references already cited in previous chapters. Kolb was elected Commissioner of Agriculture in 1911 and was again defeated for governor in 1914. His race was made on the basis of alleged frauds twenty years old.

¹⁸*Independent*, June 5, 1890. "Campaign Literature", in *Age-Herald*, June 18, 1913.

participation in the government. Indirectly the "machine" was broken. The people had learned to form an opinion and express it through the polls.¹⁹

The Democrats in Alabama, as did both of the old national parties, swallowed the Populist prescription, and there was nothing left for it to survive on. But it is hardly fair²⁰ to attribute to the Populists all legislation subsequent to 1890, notwithstanding many of their platform planks, national and state, have long since been accepted as non-socialistic measures.²¹ The party relied upon the strong arm of the government for aid. It taught the old "dead" parties not to fear a broad interpretation of the Constitution.²²

Populism was strongest in the white rural counties, however Congressman Goodwyn,²³ who was defeated (counted out?) on the Populist ticket for governor in 1896, says "there was no geographical division, as every county in the state participated in the movement. The Populist strength was composed of the majority of white voters in the state." He says the movement was composed of "the common masses of the common people. . . . The leadership was in some degree clouded by some prominent men who forgot the 'wool-hat boys' who were not moved by the same purposes as the masses, who were inspired by the highest principles of duty to themselves, their state and their posterity."

¹⁹See F. E. Haynes, "The New Sectionalism" in *Quart. Jr. Econ.*, X, pp. 290 ff. April 1896.

²⁰See H. U. Faulkner, *American Economic History*, pp. 425-6; Latane, *History of the United States*, p. 467; Schlesinger, *New Viewpoints*, p. 278; H. C. Nixon, *The Populism Movement in Iowa*, pp. 105-6.

²¹See W. A. Peffer, "The Mission of the Populist Party," in *The North American Review*, Vol. 157, Dec., 1893, pp. 665-678. Haynes, *Third Parties*, pp. 1-3, and *passim*.

²²Haynes, *Third Parties*, p. 4 ff.

²³*Letter*, Sept. 4, 1924. Captain Goodwyn says Woodrow Wilson was "an ideal Populist, and his administration a vindication of Populism." He praises the leavening influence of the Weaver-Field ticket in 1892, and says Populism ceased as a party because its principles were accepted by the two major parties. He thinks the Federal government is now administered according to the principles advocated by the Populist party that the Federal Reserve Banking system is essentially the much abused sub-treasury system demanded by the Populists. He would doubtless attribute to the Populist influence such laws as the income tax, initiative and referendum, postal savings, parcel post, the Federal Land Act, minimum wage and hour laws, workmen's compensation laws, seventeenth amendment, Railroad Transportation Act, immigration laws, etc.

He further says that in calm retrospect he regards the Populist movement, "in its purposes and its results," as "the most important since the Revolutionary War."

In the opinion²⁴ of Reverend S. M. Adams—President of the State Alliance, frequent member of the legislature, and by many considered largely responsible for Populism in Alabama—the genesis and result of the Populist movement were "*pure democracy*."

As to the aftermath of the men who joined the Populist crusade in Alabama, it may be said that the majority²⁵ were Democrats and fell back into that party, for the Republican party in Alabama is little more than a fiction, its personnel being limited largely to the holders of Federal offices. Yet several Populites joined the Republican ranks, while thousands of others in some of the white counties have played the part of free lances, or non-partisans. It is this shifting group which even today keeps the Democratic party guessing as to the result of local elections. On the whole they are despised by the "organized" Democrats of the Populist days. Now, thirty years after the fall of Populism, it is a stigma in Alabama to be called a "Populite". Prominent Populists have, as a rule, since 1896 retired into political oblivion. Captain Kolb was an exception. "Free Pass", "Run Forever" Reuben ran aggressively till his last days. He was loved and respected by thousands of farmers.²⁶

Paraphrasing²⁷ a news editorial of 1896,—One by one the various political issues wear out. Secession is dead and buried; the bloody shirt issue is a back number; Greenbackism never reached its majority; the free silver craze vanished; and soon only the memory will remain of Populism.

²⁴*Letter*, August 7, 1924.

²⁵DuBose, in Jones, *Scrap Book*, I, p. 57.

²⁶In answer to a questionnaire, an ex-governor wrote the author as follows: "The origin of the Populist movement in Alabama was the low price of farm produce and poverty of the people. They were fighting and did not know where to strike The late Ctptain euben F. Kolb was the real leader of the movement; a charming gentleman and known all over the state as "Genial Reuben." He was a man, too, of large capacity. I believe that a majority of the white people of the state were in sympathy with the movement. There is no doubt that the ballot box was unfairly handled in many counties, including a good many counties where the Populists were in control. It was popular to say that Captain Kolb was elected but personally I have had grave doubts about it."

²⁷*State Herald*, Nov. 10, 1896.

CHAPTER VIII

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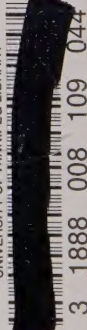
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